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PUBLIC MEN AND EVENTS

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF

MR. MONROE'S ADMINISTRATION, IN 1817,

TO THE CLOSE OF

MR. FILLMORE'S ADMINISTRATION, IN 1853.

BY

NATHAN SARGENT,

LATE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS A POLITICAL WRITER UNDER THE NOM DE PLUME OF "OLIVER OLDSCHOOL").

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1875.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by

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In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

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MR. VAN BUREN'S ADMINISTRATION.

MR. VAN BUREN was duly inaugurated President on the 4th of March, 1837, General Jackson being present to witness the ceremony.

The new President retained all the members of General Jackson's cabinet, and appointed Joel R. Poinsett Secretary of War, to fill the vacancy made by the appointment of General Cass as minister to France.

But anxious as he had been to reach the Presidential seat, he now found it no bed of roses. Nemesis, as if only waiting for the departure of "the old Hero," now rapped at the door of the White House with importunate earnestness and perseverance.

With modest self-laudation General Jackson said, in his farewell address to the people of the United States, "My public life has been a long one, and I cannot hope that it has at all times been free from errors. But I have the consolation of knowing that if mistakes have been committed they have not seriously injured the country I so anxiously endeavored to serve; and at this moment, when I surrender my last public trust, I LEAVE THIS GREAT PEOPLE PROSPEROUS AND HAPPY.

* * * * * * * *

"My humble efforts have not been spared, during my administration of the government, to restore the constitutional currency of gold and silver, and something, I trust, has been done towards the accomplishment of this most desirable object."

In his inaugural address, Mr. Van Buren gave the country to understand that he should "tread in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor;" thereby promising to pursue the line of policy which had marked General Jackson's administration; proclaiming to the country and to the world that "we present an aggregate of human prosperity surely not elsewhere to be found,"—the result, it was to be inferred, of the wisdom of the administration of "his illustrious predecessor."

But scarcely had he donned the robes of office ere the press of the country rang with continued complaints of the derangement of the currency, of distress among the poor, of commercial embarrassments, of numerous failures of the largest commercial

houses, of the scarcity of money, of the general want of confidence, of the consequent stagnation of business of every kind, and, in fact, of all the evils attending an excessive and general derangement of the currency. The following editorial from a leading New York paper is but a sample of hundreds of others:

"BETTER CURRENCY.—Money four per cent. per month. Domestic exchange broken up. Banks in the country as thick as grasshoppers. Extension of bank loans from two hundred million four hundred and fifty-one thousand two hundred and fourteen dollars to five hundred and ninety million eight hundred and ninety-two thousand six hundred and sixty-one dollars. Mississippi people appealing for relief laws. Government alarmed for the safety of the deposits."

The whole American press, with the exception of the ultra party papers, continued to give utterance to the universal feeling of the business interests of the nation, to chronicle daily the scores of failures of great mercantile houses, which were going by the board in every great commercial city, until, ON THE ELEVENTH OF MAY, THE BANKS ALL STOPPED SPECIE PAYMENT; the legitimate result of the continued tampering with, and trying "experiments" upon, the currency by the government for a series of years.

Such was the winding up of General Jackson's "humble efforts to restore to the country a constitutional currency."

Nothing but this action of the banks could save the mercantile and business communities from universal bankruptcy. As a remedial measure it was effective, so far as to enable the banks to extend their line of discounts and increase their circulation; in other words, to make money easier.

But bankruptcy and commercial distress had spread far and wide. A financial tornado had swept, and was sweeping, over the whole country,—a tornado long to be remembered. States, as well as individuals, became bankrupt. The bonds issued by the great State of Pennsylvania, many millions of which were owned by the United States Bank of Pennsylvania,—the successor to the Bank of the United States,—went down to less than half their nominal value, and the State, to her great disgrace, refused to pay the interest on them for several years, by

which repudiation thousands of families in this country and in Europe were deprived of their principal or entire means of support, and the bank lost millions of dollars. Mississippi and Arkansas wholly repudiated, and have never paid, I believe, to this day. The bonds of other States also ran down forty, fifty, or sixty per cent. below par, large amounts of these bonds being held by the United States Bank. Distress and apprehension pervaded the country. It was the very condition of things so truthfully foretold by Whig Senators years before. Mr. Clayton, of Delaware, in a debate in the Senate, some years anterior to this time, said,—

"In less than four years the pecuniary distress, the commercial embarrassments, consequent upon the destruction of the United States Bank, must exceed anything which has ever been known in our history. . . . The depreciation of paper operates as a tax on the farmer, the mechanic, and all the consumers of merchandise to its whole amount. The loss of confidence among men; the total derangement of that admirable system of exchanges which is now acknowledged to be better than exists in any other country on the globe; overtrading and speculation on false capital in every part of the country; that rapid fluctuation in the standard of value for money, which, like the unseen pestilence, withers all the efforts of industry, while the sufferer is in utter ignorance of the cause of his destruction; bankruptcies and ruin, at the anticipation of which the heart sickens,—must follow in the long train of evils which are assuredly before us."

Assuredly they came, and were now upon the country. Prophecy was in the course of fulfillment; prediction had become fact; anticipation, history; foreboding, reality. The "gold humbug" was exploded; the "better currency" was the bills of banks which did not, and could not, redeem them with specie, and not a metallic dollar was to be seen. The "long silken purses, with fine, open net-work," the "glistening gold," the "tinkling silver," but *not* "the great 'Globe' itself," had "melted into air,"

> "And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Left not a rack behind."

Meetings of merchants had been held in New York, and a committee sent to Washington to beseech President Van Buren to rescind the Specie Circular; but their efforts were unavailing: it was not his purpose to retrace the steps of "his illustrious predecessor," and he seemed incredulous of the distress of the country as represented to him.

But the stoppage of specie payments by the banks was a tocsin to which he could not turn a deaf ear, and which could not be heard but with fear and apprehension. The financial embarrassments which were so severely felt by the people now reached the government itself, heretofore incredulous and callous. The "pet banks," or State banks selected as depositories of the public moneys, of which there were about eighty, went by the board as well as the others. The crash was nearly universal. But, while specie was withdrawn from circulation, large amounts were constantly being shipped to Europe to pay for the immense importations which our "flush times" and consequent extravagance had superinduced.

In a reply by Mr. J. Q. Adams to a committee of his constituents, who had taken advantage of the occasion of presenting him a cane made of a piece of live-oak from the "Old Constitution" to present him also with an address, he thus briefly but graphically depicted the condition of the country:

"We present, at the present moment, a most astonishing and portentous spectacle to the world. Without a dollar of national debt, we are in the midst of national bankruptcy. From a treasury overflowing with fifty millions of dollars our government pays in paper trash the wages of the clerks in the public offices. The nation is insolvent,—the whole people is insolvent. You inquire if this is owing to the conduct of the late administration. I believe it is attributable to various causes, among which the grant of the use of the money in the Treasury to numerous State corporations, by order of the late President of the United States, without authority of law, was the most pernicious. . . .

"It was precisely at the moment when the whole debt was paid off, and when the revenue was doubled by the sudden and enormous increase of the proceeds of the public lands, that the

use of the moneys in the Treasury was taken from the Bank of the United States, chartered by and under the control of Congress, and dribbled out, in parcels to suit favorite purchasers, to a multitude of State banks without responsible capitals and wholly beyond the control of Congress or the Executive of the government of the United States."

The deposit banks being now unable to comply with the requirements of the Specie Circular, it became an imperative necessity for the President to call Congress together, and a proclamation to that effect was issued on the 15th of May, convening Congress on the 4th of September.

Meantime, the country was in a continued state of financial anxiety and commotion, while the press teemed with severe comments upon the acts of the late and of the present administration. Silver change had become so scarce that hotels, restaurants, and all sorts of corporations resorted to the expedient of issuing tickets and small bills, of denominations as low as twelve and a half cents. The City Councils of Philadelphia, on the 15th of May (1837), authorized the issuing of $130,000 in bills of twenty-five, fifty, and seventy-five cents. Other cities and towns followed this example.

At this time the number of banks in the United States was eight hundred and twenty-three, with a capital of $378,421,168. In 1830 the number was three hundred and twenty-nine, with a capital of $111,192,258. Increase of banks in seven years, four hundred and ninety-four; of capital, $267,228,910. Increase in number, one hundred and fifty per cent.; in capital, a little less than two hundred and fifty per cent.

Under the judicious administration of the United States Bank, this great power for good or evil was, like a great body of running water, kept within prescribed channels, and thus made useful; but when the controlling power was withdrawn, these waters rushed madly, unrestrained, hither and thither, spreading disaster over the land instead of fructification and increase, and resulted in sweeping off crops, fences, barns, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, and even houses.

It seemed to be the misfortune of Mr. Van Buren that all the evil consequences flowing from the ill-judged measures of

"his illustrious predecessor" should burst upon his devoted head, and that he should be left to stem the torrent of public discohtent and odium alone, unaided by the "old Hero," upon whom he had heretofore leaned.

ANECDOTE OF MR. CLAY.

Mr. Clay owned wild lands in Illinois, which, as he was a man who looked well after his own affairs, he sometimes visited. In doing so he had to adopt the mode of traveling usual, from necessity, in all new countries,—riding on horseback: indeed, this was the way in which he and other Western members of Congress traveled to and from Washington sixty years ago.

Coming to a farm-house on his road, near the close of the day, he courteously inquired of the owner, who happened to be at home and in sight, if he could be permitted to stop there overnight, and was answered in the affirmative. Alighting, and relieving his horse of his saddle-bags,—an invariable accompaniment of that "single horseman who might have been seen riding slowly up or down a hill,"—the animal was taken to the stable and suitably cared for.

It happened that the farmer had some fine stock, of which he was very proud. These cattle attracted the attention of Mr. Clay, who possessed the finest stock in Kentucky and was a connoisseur and amateur of blooded animals. He spoke of them, went among the herd, was greatly pleased, and criticised their various points in a manner that showed he was no "'prentice han'" in that business.

Of course the farmer was delighted with his guest. But another subject came up just before Mr. Clay retired to rest, upon which they did not agree so well,—to wit, politics. The farmer proved to be a Jackson man,—red-hot,—and in the course of conversation spoke of "that fellow Henry Clay," and of his bargain and corruption. Mr. Clay said it was possible he might be mistaken; that there might not have been any such corrupt bargaining as he had spoken of, and that possibly Mr. Clay was not exactly the man he seemed to think him. The farmer, however, was positive,—could not be mistaken; Mr.

Clay was a very dangerous man; whereupon Mr. Clay dropped the subject and retired to bed.

By some means or other, before morning the farmer learned, to his astonishment, that his guest was the veritable Henry Clay himself! What could he say to him? What apology could he make? Mr. Clay rose early, as was his custom, and went out to look at the fine cattle again. There he found the farmer, who, in a confused, embarrassed manner, addressing Mr. Clay by name, began an excuse for his rudeness, which Mr. Clay at once cut off, assuring him that he had committed no offense, and therefore no apology was needed. "You spoke," said Mr. Clay, "your honest opinion, which I hope you will find reason to change; but so long as it shall be your honest conviction I cannot object to your expressing it."

It is hardly necessary to add that from that day the farmer was one of the most devoted friends Mr. Clay had in the State of Illinois.

RADICALISM.—LOCO-FOCOS.

For some ten years previous to this time—1837—there had been residing in the city of New York an Englishwoman, of masculine person and mind, who entertained peculiar views in regard to marriage relations, as well as to religious and political doctrines, and who, by that force by which a superior and more vigorous intellect draws others within its controlling influence, had gathered numerous disciples around her. This woman was no other than Miss Fanny Wright: her peculiar radical notions in regard to the social relations and intercourse of the sexes, and her avowed disbelief in the Christian religion, became known as "Fanny Wrightism." The New York "New Era" was established and carried on for many years as the organ of this class of religio-politicians, whose numbers were comparatively small, but embraced a good deal of talent. They formed a party, or faction, calling themselves the "Equal Rights Party,"—Democrats, but the most radical of radicals.

Holding extreme Democratic doctrines, and belonging to that party, they gave it no little trouble. Opposed to all banks and monopolies of every kind, they recognized no other legitimate currency than gold and silver, in this agreeing with Jackson

and Benton, while the leaders of the Jackson, now called the Democratic, party, in New York, repudiated these radical, impracticable notions. This difference in views soon brought about a conflict of action. Being opposed to the nominations made by the party for members of Congress and the State Assembly, they gathered in great force at a meeting held at Tammany Hall in 1835 for the purpose of acting on these nominations. Here the two factions became distinct, a clear line being drawn between them, and a scene of contest and confusion—not unfamiliar to Tammany Hall—ensued, in the midst of which the gas was shut off and the hall and crowd were involved in darkness. But the Equal Rights men had anticipated this, and provided against it. Each man had brought with him a box of loco-foco matches and a candle, and instantly every man held a lighted candle in his hand.

In giving an account of this meeting, the row, and the lighting of the candles by loco-foco matches, the next day, the facetious Major Noah called the Equal Rights men *Loco-focos*, a name which was very soon applied to the whole Democratic party, though much the larger portion of that party in the State denounced that faction in the most bitter terms. Such was the origin of the term "Loco-focos," applied to them by their opponents the Whigs.

MR. VAN BUREN AS PRESIDENT.

Mr. Van Buren now occupied the elevated seat to which he had long aspired. Few men had ever reached a high official position with so much ease and so little labor or trouble. All the skill required of him was, in the first place to remove the strong prejudice which General Jackson entertained against him, and then to win and preserve his favor. This he succeeded effectually in doing, and was borne into the seat upon the wave of the old Hero's popularity, shielded by his protecting wing. Thus protected, petted, and carried along, he was scarcely required to think for himself, much less to rely on himself to manage the affairs of the party, or even to look after his own political interests outside of the White House. He was but a cabin-passenger, though destined to take the command;

for while "Old Hickory" stood upon the quarter-deck, or at the helm, no one must presume to give an order or advice, or do aught but obey.

But Mr. Van Buren was now in command; and he soon discovered—not sooner, however, than the deck-hands did—that *he* was not "born to command." It was soon perceived that he lacked that supreme confidence in himself which is the parent of prompt decision and energy of action, and which was the secret of his predecessor's power over men and his party. He who distrusts his own judgment, who hesitates, wavers, and vacillates, inspires distrust, hesitation, and want of confidence in those he would lead. It is the firm, unhesitating leader, as quick to decide as he is prompt to execute, whom men involuntarily follow and cheerfully obey.

Entering upon the duties of his high office, he found himself almost immediately beset with formidable embarrassments. To continue the nautical illustration,—the ship U. S. A. had been going lately under easy sail, under Captain Jackson, with a steady breeze that boded a pleasant voyage. If at any time squalls had arisen and struck her, her indomitable commander, who never left the helm, knew how to prevent any serious damage being done. He had set her on a course he deemed best, and when he surrendered the helm to his petted successor it was with an imperative injunction not to change that course, but to steer by the chart he had laid down, called "The Specie Circular." But no sooner had the old Mariner left the deck than mutterings of a storm were heard, and the dashing of breakers was seen ahead. The captain endeavored to keep the ship on the "Treasury Circular" tack, though at the same time manifesting doubts of its wisdom, while others saw clearly that this would lead to disaster, if not destruction. The storm at length came; the thunders of complaint roared, the winds of popular clamor blew, and the waves of discontent and commercial failures beat with such irresistible force upon the good old ship that the unskillful commander, not knowing what to do, called upon Congress, "Help, or I sink!" And in due time Congress came together to save the ship.

Whatever inclination Mr. Van Buren may have had, if he had

any, to change the policy of the government in regard to the currency, the appearance of two letters in the "Globe," addressed by General Jackson to his special friend Mr. Blair, furnished convincing proof that he—the President—was acting under a restraint he had not power or self-will enough to free himself from.

That the message sent to Congress at the called session which commenced on the 4th of September was written under the influence of these letters, hardly admitted of a doubt; and the humiliating attitude Mr. Van Buren was thus made to occupy was a source of mortification not to his friends alone. But, pledged to "tread in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor," and with the shadowy presence of that "predecessor" still before him, his bony finger pointing to those "footsteps," what could he do but follow the path pointed out?

FIRST SESSION (CALLED) OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

In obedience to the President's proclamation, Congress met on the 4th day of September, and the President's message was sent in the same day.

There was an administration majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as was shown in the latter body by the re-election of Mr. Polk as Speaker, over John Bell, by a vote of 116 to 103.

The message went into a long recital of the sad condition into which the currency had fallen, and the consequent embarrassments of the government. It proposed no measure of relief to the country, except a divorce of the government from all banks, the adoption of what was known as the "Sub-Treasury Scheme," and the issuing of treasury notes. Mr. Van Buren very plainly told the people that they must not look to the government for relief; that the government would take care of itself, and they must take care of themselves.

"Those who look to the action of this government," said the message, "for specific aid to citizens to relieve them from embarrassments arising from losses by revulsions in commerce and credit, lose sight of the ends for which it was created and the powers with which it is clothed. . . .

"All communities are apt to look to government for too much. Even in our own country, where its powers and duties are so strictly limited, we are prone to do so, especially at periods of sudden embarrassment and distress. But this ought not to be."

The message did not escape severe animadversion, though, strange to say, and to the astonishment of all, Mr. Calhoun was now arrayed on the side of Mr. Van Buren, and sustained all the measures proposed by him.

In commenting on the message, Mr. Clay said, "The President asserts that suspension proceeded from overtrading, the indulgence of a spirit of speculation produced by bank and other facilities. It would be quite as correct and just, in the instance of a homicide perpetrated by the discharge of a gun, to allege that the leaden ball, and not the man who leveled the piece, was responsible for the murder. The true inquiry is, how came that excessive overtrading and those extensive bank facilities which the message describes? Were they not the necessary and immediate consequences of the overthrow of the bank and the removal of the deposits?

* * * * * * * *

"We are told that it is necessary to separate, divorce the government from the banks. We might as well talk of separating the government from the States or the people, or from the country. We are all—people, States, Union, banks—bound up and interwoven together, united in fortune and destiny, and all entitled to the protecting care of a parental government. You might as well attempt to make the government breathe a different air, drink a different water, be lit and warmed by a different sun from the people! A hard-money government, an official corps—the servants of the people—glittering in gold, and the people themselves, their masters, buried in ruin and surrounded with rags!"

The session, though short, was very animated, and the debates in both branches were spirited: the administration and its measures had to pass through the crucible of Mr. Clay's, Mr. Webster's, Mr. King's (of Georgia), Mr. Preston's, and Mr. Tallmadge's powers of analysis and cauterization, and received

some side-blows from Mr. Rives in the Senate, where it was defended by Mr. Wright, its special champion.

In the House, as in the Senate, the Whigs seized the occasion of the present crisis, and the appeal of the President to Congress, to review the past, to compare the present distracted condition of the country with the prosperous times previous to the commencement of the charlatanic "EXPERIMENTS" upon the currency by General Jackson; and to recall the predictions they had made of the very results now experienced.

Among the acts passed at this session were an act to postpone the fourth installment of deposit with the States, an act to authorize the issue of ten millions of dollars in treasury notes, and a resolution directing postage to be paid in advance.

The principal measure recommended by the President, namely, the Divorce or Sub-Treasury bill, failed, it being laid on the table in the House by a vote of 120 to 107; the "Conservatives" voting with the Whigs. Thus ended the called session. The government was relieved by not having to deposit with the States the fourth installment of surplus revenue, nine millions of dollars, and by having the privilege of issuing ten millions of treasury notes,—paper money!

MR. VAN BUREN SOCIALLY.

Great as was the change throughout the country, politically, from General Jackson to Mr. Van Buren, nowhere was this change seen and felt more than it was, socially, at the White House. General Jackson had become too old and subject to ill-turns to enjoy or entertain company cordially; besides, his manner and temper had become austere, arrogant, and dictatorial. Pleasant conversation can take place only between those recognized, at least for the moment, as equals, and where respect is mutual. But, though he might condescend to listen to another, he tolerated no difference of opinion, and laid down the law and the gospel to all "as one having authority." Under these circumstances, the White House had few social attractions. Its air was cold and depressing.

The present occupant, on the contrary, was genial and social even with his most decided opponents,—Mr. Clay, for instance,

—between whom and "the Little Magician" there had always existed very pleasant and even cordial personal relations. The President's great social tact and genial manners soon dispelled the cold gloom of the Executive mansion, and attracted crowds to his levees and receptions.

If General Jackson was intolerant and dogmatic in his political views, Mr. Van Buren was not less his antipode in this than he was in almost everything else. He engaged in politics as he engaged in a cause as a lawyer,—to win profit and reputation. We have seen that he was ready to join and support Mr. Adams in 1825–26 had there been sufficient inducement held out to him to do so. But, Mr. Adams underrating him and failing to secure him,—as Mr. Clay failed to secure Mr. Kendall,—like a soldier of fortune of the Middle Ages, he tendered his services to the other side, and they were accepted. Indulging in no acrimonious or harsh language towards his opponents, the two parties gradually relaxed their bitter feelings towards each other. During his four years, Washington social life was pleasant and attractive.

At that time the elements which made up social life in the capital were very different from what they are at present; but the change from the old to the new had commenced. Washington was then a straggling kind of provincial town, containing few houses commodious enough to accommodate a large party, and these few dropped, as it were, here and there, at wide distances from one another: indeed, there was not then in the city what would now be called even a *third-class* house. But if the hotels and dwellings were small, so was the company. Very few Senators or members of the House brought their wives, and fewer their daughters, with them to spend the winter here; and the female portion of society, its ornament, and all that gave it grace, spirit, and attraction, was chiefly made up of the old residents of Washington and Georgetown, the wives and daughters of the civil officers of the government, and of officers of the army and navy stationed or temporarily resident here, and the families of foreign ministers. Added to these were a few of the wives and daughters of members of Congress,—in the aggregate comparatively few, but highly refined and intellectual.

Hotel accommodations were very limited, and in no way comparable to what they are now. The custom was for Senators and members of the House to form what were termed "messes" at private boarding-houses, larger or smaller according to the size and accommodations of the house; generally they consisted of from eight to twelve members: sometimes of more. These were formed of members of congenial political opinions, —Democrats messing together, and National Republicans or Whigs by themselves. From these all others were excluded, unless some one of the "mess" had a friend whom he desired should be admitted, and for whom, of course, he could vouch; but no one could be admitted without the consent of the mess.

In these clubs, or "messes," members lived an unsocial, bachelor sort of life, and a life of drudgery as well; since it had not become customary then for every committee to have a clerk to do its work; every member of a committee took his share of the labor to be done, the chairman usually assigning himself the heaviest portion. There was a common parlor for the gentlemen of the mess, but rarely did any member enjoy the luxury of a private parlor, even though he had his wife with him. Occasionally, though not often, a mess was adorned by the presence of a lady or ladies, the wife or wives of a member or members, in which case it received more special attention from the high dignitaries of the government, foreign ministers, and others.

As gentlemen of the same political affinities preferred to mess together, so Southern and Northern gentlemen holding the same political opinions preferred, as a general rule, to associate with others from their own section. Dawson's, No. 1, 2, 3, on North A Street, Capitol Hill, opposite the Capitol grounds, was in by-gone days famous for its Southern messes. Here congregated those congenial spirits, John Randolph of Roanoke, Nat. Mason, of North Carolina, Mr. Newton, of Virginia, William R. King, of Alabama, Willie P. Mangum, of North Carolina, and others not now remembered. Subsequently the head-quarters of the South were transferred to Hill's boarding-house, known as "the Old Capitol" and "the

Old Capitol Prison" during the Rebellion. Here boarded Mr. Calhoun, around whom gathered many of "the chivalry" of the South, and here he died in 1851. A favorite boarding-house, in subsequent years, at which Whigs did most congregate, was Mrs. Carter's (Dawson's, No. 2), which is still as select and desirable for those who prefer the quietude of a private house to the noise and *éclat* of a large hotel as in years past.*

This sort of bachelor-life was not conducive to moral restraint, but was the cause of much of that profligacy which formerly prevailed in Washington.

The more general custom of wives and daughters accompanying husbands and fathers to Washington and spending the session with them, and even keeping house, entertaining company, and thus becoming an important part of the refined society of the national metropolis, is of a late growth, the result of railways. Men who are expected to accompany their wives and daughters to receptions, and to dinner and other parties, will not often be found at a gambling "hell."

Many Senators and members of the House now own elegant houses, almost palaces, in Washington, which they occupy with their families during the sessions of Congress, thus transferring their homes, for the time being, to the capital, with no interregnum of their domestic life. Quite different is this from what was seen thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. But members could not then enjoy the luxury of having their families with them during the sessions; their pay was quite inadequate to the expense. *Tout cela est changé.*

But to return to the President. He had the high art of blending dignity with ease and suavity. He could make the Executive mansion pleasant and attractive to all without compromising the dignity of his high office, receiving and entertaining guests, but strictly preserving the etiquette, established by Washington and observed by every President down to Mr. Johnson, of never being the guest of others. This also has been changed; I sit not in judgment to decide whether rightly or wrongly.

*Since this was written, all the houses on North A Street and South A Street have been removed, to make room for the extension of the Capitol grounds.

NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

For a period of more than eight years, NICHOLAS BIDDLE, as the representative of the United States Bank, had been one of the very prominent characters in the political and financial drama that had been enacted during General Jackson's Presidential term,—General Jackson himself being to that drama what Hamlet is to the play of that name. One of these characters had already strutted his hour upon the stage, and made his exit; the other was about to retire also; both soon to appear and be judged at that Bar where the "*vox Dei*" is unswayed by the "*vox populi*," and the secrets of the heart are known. Both were extraordinary men. Mr. Biddle was endowed with rare qualities both of head and heart. "He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one." Possessing an intellect that seemed able to master any subject, great or small, a mind stored with ancient and modern lore, a taste naturally refined, but improved by the highest cultivation, he had the simplicity, unostentation, and playful humor of a child.

While the position he occupied, and the implacable war made upon him and the finances of the country by the President for a series of years, called forth the exercise and display of character and abilities on his part which gave him a world-wide renown as the most eminent financier of the age, he also seemed to possess that grasp of mind, that solid judgment, that extensive acquaintance with public affairs, that ardent love of his country and pride in her greatness, present and prospective, that self-control, and that prophetic sagacity which foresees the tendency of present measures to affect favorably or unfavorably the future interests of the nation, which, combined in the same individual, constitute a great statesman. In the truthful language of another, "so versatile was his genius that he seemed equally fitted as a Palinurus to guide the vessel of state in the stormiest times, to have gained an exalted fame in the senate or forum, or to have adorned the literature of his country and age with the choicest garlands of genius and intellect."

Happy in a temper whose calmness and placidity were perfectly imperturbable amid the storms that raged around him,

the torrents of bitter and malignant calumny heaped upon him, even by those he was conferring favors upon, he was ever cheerful, "calm as a summer's morn," and pleasant as a new-made bride. No harsh or acrimonious word ever escaped his lips; no provocation could draw from him a hasty or an angry expression. Ever self-poised and genial, ever disposed to judge even his enemies with that charity which "thinketh no evil," threatening financial storms, or present disasters, were seen and met with that cool, unruffled self-reliance which is the surest indication of a serene mind, and a power to grapple with and overcome whatever impediments or difficulties are thrown or come in the way. Meet him in his room, in the bank, or on the street, walking home about four o'clock, as was his habit, and no one could judge from his countenance or manner whether there was a financial tornado raging or the atmosphere was as calm as an Indian summer's day. Go to a Wistar-party, on Saturday evening, and you would find him in a circle of "laughing philosophers," bandying witticisms with Dr. Chapman, joking with Judge Hopkinson, listening to a pleasant anecdote from Dr. Dunglison, Dr. Mitchell, or John Price Wetherill, told with zest, and calling forth side-shaking laughter,—the great financier the most hilarious of the circle.

A single glance at Mr. Biddle told the observer that he was no ordinary man. Of medium height, he was stout, well made, firm set; his head large, forehead broad and high, his eye dark, clear, and penetrating, his face full, square, and florid; his mouth and lips expressive of delicacy, while his chin and the lower part of his face indicated great firmness. Altogether, his features combined beauty of outline with a refined intellectual expression in a remarkable degree.

Probably no man in the nation labored more hours, or with more zeal for the public good, during the eight years of General Jackson's administration and the first year of Mr. Van Buren's, than Mr. Biddle. Yet during all that time calumny pursued him like a fiend, striving to thwart his best efforts, to create distrust of his motives, and to blacken his character. While General Jackson was trying his disastrous "experiments" upon the currency, and thereby throwing it into confusion and break-

ing up the best currency and system of exchanges this country or any other had ever seen, Mr. Biddle, with what power and means were left him after the removal of the deposits, was constantly striving to counteract the evils growing out of this war upon the banks, the currency, and the merchants; and it cannot be doubted that he was enabled to stave off the grand catastrophe till General Jackson left the Presidential chair, when the storm broke with all its fury upon Mr. Van Buren's devoted head.

But the time came when he deemed himself at liberty to give up his herculean labors and retire to his own delightful Andalusia, on the banks of the Delaware, and enjoy that repose he had so well earned. The directors of the bank, as a small token of their appreciation of his long, arduous, and useful labors, presented him with a splendid service—a complete dinner-set—of solid silver, with a proper inscription engraved on each piece.

He had, however, scarcely sought the quietness of private life, and begun to revel among his plants and flowers, of which he was very fond, when the effects of the war waged upon the bank, and the various "experiments" tried upon the currency, became visible. It had been injured past help. It resumed specie payments, as did the New York banks, on the 10th day of May, but only to stop again soon and forever. Many were the sufferers by its fall, and terrible the havoc it made among families apparently wealthy; many of them his own personal friends.

He was not then administering its affairs, and advised against the policy being pursued, as likely to result in ruin. It was but poor consolation to know that he had foreseen and predicted the disastrous result, which, had he been then at the head of the institution, would probably have been avoided or greatly mitigated.

Again he became a target for every species of offensive missile, and the scape-goat for the sins of others. Upon his devoted head was poured all the ill feeling engendered by misfortune. He was held responsible for that which no human power could avert, as "the medicine-man" is held responsible

by the Indians for too much or too little rain. His name became a term of obloquy; the old Jackson men now indulged their hatred in maligning him to their hearts' content. He was the very spirit of evil, the companion of "Old Nick," and the author of all the distress the country was suffering,—the logical results of Jackson's war upon the currency, long ago foretold.

Did he hear all this? Did he know that thousands upon thousands were daily pouring their bitterest maledictions upon him, and those, too, whom he had befriended? Surely he did; and he knew and felt keenly the great suffering of the country which he was powerless to relieve. The iron entered his soul; but

> "He never told his grief,
> But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,
> Feed on his aching heart: he bore it all:
> And with a conscious rectitude of soul,
> He sat, like patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief."

If he did not die of a broken heart, the calumny heaped upon him, which it was vain to resist, undoubtedly shortened his days.

I have spoken of Mr. Biddle from my own personal knowledge of him, and it is a pleasure to me to lay even the smallest garland upon his tomb,—to do what little is in my power to present him as I saw and knew him. I can truthfully say that if ever there was a man of high, chivalric, sensitive honor, honesty, and integrity, who valued these more than life, and whose patriotism was most lofty and earnest, but from whom justice has been most signally withheld, that man was NICHOLAS BIDDLE.

The question as to the security of the public deposits in the United States Bank being before the House of Representatives, April 13, 1833, Mr. McDuffie, one of the late committee to examine into the affairs of the bank, in speaking of Mr. Biddle, said "he knew him well; and he conscientiously believed that there did not live a more honest or a more honorable man on the face of the earth."

Mr. McDuffie further said that "no man in the United States possessed a more thorough knowledge of banking in all its

operations. And never had an institution been managed with more perfect judgment or more consummate ability than this had been by him."

FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

Congress met on the first Monday of December, and the President's message was promptly sent in.

No relief had been given to the country financially, for which it cried aloud to the government, nor did the President now propose any relieving measure, save that which he had urged upon Congress at the extra session, and that was only for the relief of the government itself; namely, the Sub-Treasury scheme. This was *the* measure of the session,—its support or opposition to it the test of fidelity and loyalty to the administration. By this test, strangest among strange things, Mr. Calhoun was now an administration man! a VAN BUREN man! and so were his followers, Pickens, of South Carolina, and others. Mr. Calhoun a Van Buren man! Mr. Calhoun patted on the back and called a good boy by Mr. Blair, who had applied to him all sorts of vile names, and said he would lie when truth would answer his purpose just as well! Mr. Calhoun had become an advocate of the Sub-Treasury, —a supporter of the administration; and this brought him in collision with Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, and other Senators with whom he was but the year before zealously co-operating in opposition to General Jackson and his destructive measures!

Mr. King, Senator from Georgia, in a letter to a friend, reviewing the political field and the aspects of the Democratic party, which letter found its way into the "National Intelligencer," said, "We [the Democrats] have lost Tallmadge, Rives, Clarke [and others named by him], and what have we gained? Mr. Calhoun, who but lately declared that our party was kept together 'by the cohesive power of public plunder'!"

What new light Saul had seen on his way to Damascus (Washington) has never been authentically related. But that Mr. Calhoun was as full of zeal against the Democrats on his way from Fort Hill, his residence, to Washington to attend the called session as Saul was against the prophets, at least till he

arrived at Richmond, Va., was stated by a member of Congress from his own State who rode in the stage with him to the latter place, where Mr. Calhoun stopped a day or two.

Did any one of Mr. Calhoun's friends at Richmond intimate to him that it would be wasting ammunition to fight Mr. Van Buren, as he was a "fixed fact" for four years, and would then go out anyhow, not having strength enough to be re-elected? Did any one at the same time happen to say that, as Mr. Van Buren was from the North, the South would be entitled to the next Democratic candidate, but, unfortunately, the most prominent Southern man was now in opposition to that party? Was this the great light which Saul saw, and which had such a miraculous effect upon him?

All this is mere hypothesis,—a mere suggestion of a *possible* reason for that which seemed to every one unaccountable.

Colonel Benton has stated, in his "Thirty Years' View," "that no promise, pledge, or condition of any kind took place between Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Van Buren in coming together as they did at this juncture;" and I can say that I never heard it charged that there was: and there was no occasion for any. But Colonel Benton also says, "How far Mr. Calhoun might have looked to his own chance of succeeding Mr. Van Buren is another question, *and a fair one.* The succession was certainly open in the Democratic line. Those who stood nearest the head of the party [Mr. Benton] had no desire for the Presidency, but the contrary, and only wished a suitable chief magistrate at the head of the government. . . . Under such circumstances, Mr. Calhoun might have indulged in a vision of the Democratic succession. . . . *There was certainly a talk about it, and a sounding of public men.*" Mr. Benton states that he himself was sounded on the subject at two different times by two friends of Mr. Calhoun,—one of Virginia, the other of Missouri. Upon the supposition I have suggested, Mr. Calhoun's course is easily comprehended; but upon no other.

TROUBLE ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.

An insurrection had broken out in Canada, and armed bodies of men, calling themselves "Patriots," were in open rebellion

against the government. Of course there were many on our side of the line who sympathized with the "Patriots,"—otherwise "insurgents,"—and were anxious, and getting prepared, to show their sympathy in a more substantial way than by mere words. Men were enlisted or banded together under officers, armed and drilled for war, and giving aid and comfort, and even assistance, to the Canadian insurgents, some having crossed over and joined them, while others were ready to do so whenever they should deem it prudent or a fitting time.

Affairs had become so serious that General Scott was sent to Buffalo, and United States troops ordered to the frontier, the President issuing his proclamation on the 5th of January, 1838, earnestly exhorting all citizens of the United States to return to their respective homes, and stating that a military force consisting, in part at least, of citizens of the United States, had been actually organized at Navy Island and were still in arms, and that arms and munitions of war had been procured by the insurgents in the United States.

The President at the same time sent a message to Congress on the subject. General Scott soon succeeded in breaking up the military organization designed to aid the insurgents, and several persons who had made themselves conspicuous in this "Patriot war" on our side of the line were arrested by the United States marshal, and a few by the Canadian government.

But a great outrage upon the United States was perpetrated by order of the Canadian government or authorities. The steamboat Caroline was lying at Schlosser, on the American side of the Niagara River, a mile or two above the Falls, on board of which were thirteen men. This steamer, it was alleged by the Canadians, and probably with some truth, had been engaged in taking over from the United States to the Canada side men and munitions of war, and was also used by the military force assembled on Navy Island to keep up their communication with the mainland and bring supplies to them; and, furthermore, she was probably relied upon to transport them from the island to the Canadian shore whenever they should be ready to join "the Patriots."

Under these circumstances it was quite natural that "the loy-

alists" should entertain very hostile feelings towards the little steamer, and greatly desire her destruction; and this they determined should be effected. Accordingly, on the night of the 29th of December, Captain Drew, a British officer, in command of seventy or eighty men, crossed the river, boarded the steamer, finding all on board asleep, except, perhaps, one careless, sleepy sentinel, or watchman, cut her out, set her on fire, and took her into the stream, down which she soon went over the Falls; most of the crew, if not all, making their escape.

THE DEBATE IN THE SENATE ON THE SUB-TREASURY BILL.—A PASSAGE AT ARMS BETWEEN MR. CALHOUN AND MR. CLAY, AND BETWEEN MR. CALHOUN AND MR. WEBSTER.

As Mr. Van Buren's lieutenant and mouth-piece in the Senate, and general leader of the party in Congress, Mr. Wright soon brought forward the Sub-Treasury bill, which had been defeated at the extra session, and supported it in an elaborate and able speech. Mr. Calhoun also came to its support, giving the arguments which had induced him to desire its passage. It was a novel sight,—Mr. Calhoun laboring shoulder to shoulder with Silas Wright, Colonel Benton, and others against whom he had so lately and for so many years been doing battle with all the zeal of a Christian against a Turk, the last and most memorable, and the most sad, being the expunging conflict.

At the time when General Jackson chose to quarrel with Mr. Calhoun and thrust him off to make room for his new favorite, Mr. Calhoun, having nowhere else to go, Coriolanus-like, entered the camp of his former enemies, the Volcians, and, though not calling himself a Volcian (National Republican), he drew his sword and fought manfully, and with unusual zeal, side by side with his new associates. It mattered little what name he might choose to bear, so long as he followed and sustained the flag of his associates.

He had now placed himself in an attitude which naturally excited surprise, especially of those with whom he had been of late years acting, and which might subject his motives to severe and damaging criticism, and he seemed to feel the necessity of forestalling that criticism by a public explanation, by which

he hoped to disarm censure. This was done in a letter which he published, called the "Edgefield Letter," in which he says,—

"As soon as I saw this state of things, I clearly perceived that a very important question was presented for our determination, which we were compelled to decide forthwith: Shall we continue our joint attack with the Nationals [Whigs] on those in power in the new position which they have been compelled to occupy? It was clear that, with our joint forces, we could utterly overthrow and demolish them; but it was not less clear that *the victory would inure, not to us, but exclusively to the benefit of our allies and their cause.* . . . To join them with their avowed object in the attack to overthrow those in power, on the ground they occupied against the bank, would of course not only have placed the government and country in their hands without opposition, but would have committed us, beyond the possibility of extrication, for a bank, and absorbed our party in the ranks of the National Republicans. The first fruits of the victory would have been an overshadowing national bank, with an immense capital, not less than from fifty to a hundred millions. . . . The next would be the indissoluble union of the political opponents, whose principles and policy are so opposite to ours, and so dangerous to our institutions, as well as oppressive to us."

Seeing this publication after the extra session, showing that Mr. Calhoun had deliberately, and upon calculation, parted company with his "allies" and gone over to the enemy, is it surprising that the former should look upon him with no very pleasant feelings? A passage at arms between him and Mr. Clay, and between him and Mr. Webster, was inevitable, and it came. But, memorable as it was, it is impossible to convey any adequate idea of it. One may give the words of an orator, but the tone and emphasis in which they are uttered, the gestures, the look, the fiery expression of the eye, the scornful curl of the lip, even the momentary silence of the speaker as he prepares and gathers his force to utter some scathing sarcasm or thundering philippic,—these no pen can describe; they must be seen, heard, and felt to be appreciated: and these go to make up the great orator.

Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, between whom the principal and most skillful passages at arms took place, had long filled the highest positions in the government and in Congress,—had won the most enviable fame as statesmen and orators; of both the nation was, and had reason to be, proud; both were governed by the loftiest impulses of patriotism, and indignantly scorned all base incentives; and both were idolized by their followers. But their manner and style of speaking were totally unlike, though the powers of each were taxed to their utmost and strikingly exemplified in this conflict. Mr. Calhoun sought no adventitious aids of oratory; his matter was sententious, solid, compact, terse, clear, and direct. He went straight to his object; loitered not by the way to gather flowers or wreathe garlands. He was too earnest for that. He selected his words with great care, and chose those which were the most simple and forcible, and they came from his lips with a force and distinctness as if shot from a rifle. He used no action; he needed none; it would have been out of place. His sarcasms, or home thrusts, when made, were minié-balls, penetrating wherever aimed by his steady eye, followed by no indication of exultation that he had hit the mark. He knew he had, and that was enough for him. In speaking, he stood firm, almost immovable, seldom making a gesture, and usually looking steadily at the presiding officer, though always addressing "Senators," instead of "Mr. President," or "Sir." His voice was sharp, his words and sentences quickly uttered, but with such a clear enunciation that every word was distinctly heard.

Much of Mr. Clay's oratorical power consisted in that "action" recommended by Demosthenes. His hands, his arms, his head, and, above all, his eye, gave force to his words by their appropriate action, whether gentle, persuasive, humorous, earnest, vehement, or denunciatory; and his voice, soft as a lute or full as a trumpet, responded to every feeling he desired to express. It was of wonderful modulation, sweetness, and power.

Mr. Calhoun spoke on the 15th of February, 1838, in support of the Sub-Treasury bill before the Senate, and was followed in a few days by Mr. Clay, who, in the first part of his speech, opposed the bill; the latter part being devoted to

Mr. Calhoun, upon whose course he animadverted with much severity.

"The eloquent Senator from South Carolina," said Mr. Clay, "has intimated that the course of my friends and myself, in opposing this bill, was unpatriotic, and that we ought to have followed his lead; and in a late letter of his he has spoken of his alliance with us and of his motives for quitting us. I cannot admit the justice of his reproach. We united, if indeed there was any alliance in the case, to restrain the enormous expansion of Executive power; to arrest the progress of corruption; to rebuke usurpation; and to drive the Goths and Vandals from the capital. . . . And how often have we witnessed the Senator from South Carolina, with woeful countenance and in doleful strains, pouring forth touching and mournful eloquence on the degeneracy of the times and the downward tendency of the republic? Day after day in the Senate have we seen the displays of his lofty and impassioned eloquence. Although I shared largely with the Senator in his apprehension for the purity of our institutions and the permanency of our liberty, disposed always to look at the brighter side of human affairs, I was sometimes inclined to hope that the vivid imagination of the Senator had depicted the dangers by which we were encompassed in somewhat stronger colors than they justified.

"The arduous contest in which we were so long engaged was about to terminate in a glorious victory. The very object for which the alliance was formed was about to be accomplished. At this critical moment the Senator left us; he left us for the very purpose of preventing the success of the common cause. He took up his musket, knapsack, and shot-pouch, and joined the other party. He went, horse, foot, and dragoons; and he himself composed the whole corps.

* * * * * * * *

"Whilst the Senator from South Carolina professes to be the friend of the State banks, he has attacked the whole banking system of the United States. He is their friend: he only thinks they are all unconstitutional! . . . The distinguished Senator is no enemy to the banks: he merely thinks them inju-

rious to the morals of the country. He likes them very well, but he nevertheless believes that they levy a tax of twenty-five millions annually on the industry of the country! . . . The Senator tells us that it has been only within a few days that he has discovered that it is illegal to receive bank-notes in payment of public dues. Does he think that the usage of the government under all its administrations, and with every party in power, which has prevailed for nigh fifty years, ought to be set aside by a novel theory of his, just dreamed into existence, even if it possess the merit of ingenuity? . . . The Senator and I began our public career nearly together; we remained together throughout the war [1812]. We agreed as to a Bank of the United States,—as to a protective tariff,—as to internal improvements,—and lately as to those arbitrary and violent measures which characterized the administration of General Jackson. No two men ever agreed better together in respect to important measures of public policy. We concur in nothing now."

At the close of Mr. Clay's speech, Mr. Calhoun rose and merely said he should reply to the Senator from Kentucky at his leisure. The nature of his reply required time: he took it, and at the end of twenty days responded.

He said he rose to fulfill his promise to notice at his leisure the reply of the Senator from Kentucky to the remarks he made some time previous.

On comparing the reply with the remarks, he was at a loss to determine whether it was most remarkable for its omissions or for its misstatements. Not one of his arguments was fairly stated or answered. . . .

"But the Senator did not restrict himself to a reply to my arguments, but introduced personal remarks which I cannot pass without notice, averse as I am to personal controversies." Mr. Calhoun said that when last up he had scrupulously avoided every remark which had the least personal or party bearing. In proof of which he appealed to Senators. The Senator, having no pretext to give a personal direction to the discussion, had made a premeditated attack on him. What could be his motive?

Mr. Calhoun could see but one: failing to answer his *argument*, he had substituted personalities; his blows were aimed at him, that through him he might reach the cause he advocated.

"The leading charge of the Senator—that on which all the others depend, and which being overthrown, they fall to the ground—is that I," said Mr. Calhoun, "have gone over; have left his side, and joined the other." By this, Mr. Calhoun supposed, was meant that he had either changed his opinion, or abandoned the principles he had advocated, or deserted his party. He met and repelled the charge.

He then gave an outline of the principal events in his public life, to prove that he had been consistent, always entertaining the same principles and supporting the same course of policy. In his remarks he was exceedingly interesting, enlisting the deepest attention of the crowded Senate and galleries. But, to show his consistency with himself, he requested the Secretary to read long extracts from former speeches, which, though having an important bearing upon the present controversy, tried the patience of Senators and spectators.

After the reading of these long passages from his former speeches, he said, "Such, Senators, are my recorded sentiments. They are full and explicit on all the questions involved in the present issue, and prove, beyond a possibility of doubt, that I have changed no opinion, abandoned no principle, nor deserted any party. My relations to the two opposing parties are unchanged."

Mr. Calhoun claimed that he stood on the same ground he had stood upon all along; and, of course, if his relations to the two opposing parties were changed,—if he now acted with those he had opposed, and opposed those with whom he had acted,—the change was not in him. He at least had stood still. This declaration was received by Senators and others with at least a smile of doubt. But, Mr. Calhoun said, he had never belonged to the party with which he had acted. That he acted with the opposition was because he was opposed to the removal of the deposits, and to the league of banks,—as he was now; and if he now acted with the administration and opposed the

Nationals, it was because he was now, as then, opposed to either a league of State banks or a national bank.

"Having now established by the record that I have changed no opinion, abandoned no principle, nor deserted any party, I proceed to another point. The Senator stated that in a certain letter I had assigned as the reason why I could not join in the attack on the administration, that the benefit of the victory would not inure to myself, or would not place me and my party in power. I suppose the Senator alluded to my Edgefield letter."

Mr. Clay said he did.

Mr. Calhoun.—"I again take issue on the fact. I assigned no such reason as the Senator attributes to me. My object was not power or place, either for myself or party." He endeavored to show that if he and his party should unite with the opposition in their attack on the administration, the victory over them would be a victory over himself and his friends and their principles. This was plain. The administration, as he had shown, had taken the very ground he, Mr. Calhoun, occupied in 1834, and on which the whole State-rights party stood at that time.

He had a portion of his Edgefield letter read, and asked if there was anything in the extract which would warrant the construction the Senator had attempted to force on it. "Is it not manifest," said Mr. Calhoun, "that the expression on which he fixes, that the victory would inure, not to us, but exclusively to the benefit of the opposition, alludes not to power or place, but to principle and policy? Can words be more plain?

"But in so premeditated and indiscriminate an attack it could not be expected that my motives would entirely escape; and we accordingly find the Senator very charitably leaving it to time to disclose my motives for going over. I, who have changed no opinion, abandoned no principle, and deserted no party,—I, who have stood still, and maintained my ground against every difficulty, to be told that it is left to time to disclose my motives! The imputation sinks to the earth with the groundless charge on which it rests. I stamp it with scorn in the dust. I pick up the dart which fell harmless at my feet and hurl it back. What the Senator charges on me unjustly

he has actually done. He went over on a memorable occasion, and did not leave it to time to disclose his motives."

This part of Mr. Calhoun's speech was delivered with great emphasis. The speaker was wrought up to the highest pitch of resentful indignation, and when he said he stamped the charge with scorn in the dust, he suited the action to the word, stamping with great force upon the floor; and when he said, "I hurl it [the dart] back," he fixed his eye upon Mr. Clay with a look of intensified scorn, defiance, and triumph, throwing then his own dart at Mr. Clay in the broad allusion he made to the election of Mr. Adams by Mr. Clay's influence.

The scene was dramatic, and the nerves of every one present were drawn to their utmost tension.

Mr. Clay rose and replied that but for the present interesting occasion he should not have been in the Senate, as he was much indisposed; "but," said Mr. Clay, raising himself to his full height, "as I *am*, I AM self-poised and prepared. I ask not two or three weeks [the time taken by Mr. Calhoun] to prepare my speech in reply to the Senator from South Carolina."

After paying a due tribute to the great abilities of that Senator, he said, "The Senator complains that I accuse him of inconsistency when he says that duties should be received in gold and silver and nothing else, and yet consents to receive bank paper for six years. A national bank is not unconstitutional when you give it a charter for twelve years, but unconstitutional if chartered for a longer period." Mr. Clay went on, referring to Mr. Calhoun's various speeches and proposed measures at different times, showing his numerous inconsistencies, and especially inconsistency with his present position.

He said the duty of animadverting upon the public course of the Senator was an extremely painful one, but he felt it to be a duty nevertheless. It was painful, because he had long served in the public councils with the Senator, admired his genius, and for a great while had been on terms of intimacy with him, and had always endeavored to ascribe to him patriotic motives and public virtues. On more than one occasion he had defended him when assailed: he did so until he saw this most exceptionable letter (holding up the Edgefield letter, dated Fort

Hill, November 3, 1837). "When I read in this letter the unjust reproaches cast upon my friends and myself, I was most reluctantly compelled to change my opinion of the honorable Senator. One so distinguished as he is cannot expect to be indulged in speaking as he pleases of others without a reciprocal privilege. And after all he has said and published of those he lately acted with, can he really persuade himself that he occupies on this occasion a defensive attitude? . . .

"State interposition!" exclaimed Mr. Clay. "*Nullification* overthrew the protective tariff and American system! Can the Senator, knowing what he knows and I know, make such an assertion? No, sir! the Compromise was not extorted by the terror of nullification. It was a compassionate concession to the imprudence and impotency of nullification." Mr. Clay here gave the account I have heretofore given of the origin of the Compromise act, for which look back to 1833. "So far from nullification having overthrown the protective policy, in assenting to the Compromise it expressly sanctioned the constitutional power and perpetuated protection; and the Senator voted for the bill which continued it for nine years. In the consultations between us in respect to the Compromise act, every point was yielded by him. I insisted, and he yielded. He opposed home valuation, but gave way finally."

Mr. Clay read another extract from the Edgefield letter, in which Mr. Calhoun said, "*The victory would not inure to us.*" "In a common struggle, then, for the benefit of our whole country, the Senator from South Carolina was calculating on the party advantages which would result from success. He quit because he feared he and his party would be absorbed by us. Well, what is to be their fate in his new alliance? Does he hope to absorb his new allies? . . . He has left no party, and joined no party! No, none. He expects us to believe this, though we see him in frequent consultations and intimate association with the other party. Abandoned no party? Why, his letter proclaims that he has, and gives his reasons for quitting us: namely, that we favor a national bank, which the Senator himself sustained twenty-four of the twenty-seven years he has been in public life!

"The Senator has taken upon himself to impute to me the charge of going over on some occasion, in a manner which left my motive no matter of conjecture. If he alludes to the stale and refuted calumny of George Kremer, I assure him I can hear it without the slightest emotion."

Mr. Clay here gave a relation of some of the events connected with the election of Mr. Adams, stating that he communicated to his present colleague, Mr. Crittenden, before leaving Kentucky, his intention to cast the vote he did cast. "Nor," said Mr. Clay, "have I ever, for a single moment, regretted the vote I then gave for the eminent gentleman who sits beside me." (The venerable Mr. Adams sat in the seat next to Mr. Clay, and Mr. Pope, the Representative from his district, immediately before him.) "My immediate constituents approved my action on that occasion, and it is their glory as well as my own never to have concurred in the elevation of General Jackson.

"But," said Mr. Clay, "if my information is not wholly incorrect, the Senator from South Carolina went over on that occasion, if there was any going over in that Presidential election." Mr. Clay here referred to the movement of Mr. Dallas, in Philadelphia, withdrawing Mr. Calhoun's name as a candidate for the Presidency,—of which I have spoken,—up to which time the Senator was known as the supporter of Mr. Adams. What motives induced him, after that, to unite in the election of General Jackson he did not know.

Mr. Clay referred to his having changed on the bank question, and admitted that he had done so, in common with Mr. Madison and the great body of the Republican party to which he belonged. "But the Senator from South Carolina was continually changing. He was once gayly mounted on that hobby,—internal improvements. We rode double: he before, and I behind. But he quietly slipped off, leaving me to hold the bridle." He then spoke of Mr. Calhoun's having introduced and carried the bill in 1816 setting apart the large bonus of the bank for internal improvements, and of his brilliant report as Secretary of War, sketching as magnificent a scheme of internal improvements for the entire nation as ever was presented to the admiration and wonder of mankind.

"As I have before said, we began our public career nearly together; we remained together throughout the war and down to the peace; we agreed as to a Bank of the United States, as to a protective tariff, as to internal improvements, and lately as to those arbitrary and violent measures which characterized the administration of General Jackson. No two prominent public men ever agreed better together in respect to important measures of national policy. We concur now in nothing. We separate forever."

When Mr. Clay closed, Mr. Calhoun rose, and, referring to Mr. Clay's remark in regard to the tariff of 1816, said that Mr. Lowndes, his colleague, took the lead in the tariff bill, and not himself, though he made an off-hand speech in favor of it. But he contended that the act was for revenue, with incidental protection. The question of the constitutionality of protection was not then, nor for some years after, raised. "As to the bonus bill," said Mr. Calhoun, "it grew out of the recommendation of Mr. Madison in his last message. The Senator refers to my report on internal improvements when I was Secretary of War, but, as usual with him, forgot to tell that I made it in obedience to a resolution of the House; I then expressly stated that I did not involve the constitutional question."

In reference to this last subject, I beg to refer the reader back to my account of my first interview, in June, 1824, with Mr. Calhoun. I found him a perfect enthusiast on the subject of internal improvements; and he then undertook to demonstrate to me that by his great system of canals and national roads—railroads were then unheard of—he should make Washington City the commercial emporium of the country, as well as its national capital.

Mr. Clay responded, "The Senator says if I have not changed my *principles* I have my company. Really, Mr. President, the gentleman has so recently changed *his* relations that he seems not to know into what company he has fallen."

He quoted a passage from one of Mr. Calhoun's speeches in 1834, in which he took very strong ground against the measure he was now advocating; "one objection then urged against it being that it was *far less safe, economical, and efficient than the*

present: namely, banks of deposit. The Senator is now opposed to all banks. In 1816, as the head of the committee of ways and means, where he, Mr. Clay, put him, he reported and supported the bank bill. In 1834, after the deposits were seized and the currency turned upside down, he came forward with a remedy: namely, a continuation of the Bank of the United States for twelve years. In regard to the tariff of 1816, the only point in dispute was whether we had the right to protect the cotton manufacture or not. The Senator supported the measure on the ground that we had that power. In regard to internal improvements, if he had any doubt about their constitutionality, why tantalize us with such a gorgeous picture of canals and roads? Why did he not suggest to Congress his constitutional doubts?

"Can there be any other conclusion than that he had no doubt about it? What an extraordinary thing would it be should the head of a department, in his official capacity, present a report to both Houses of Congress, proposing a most elaborate plan for the internal improvement of the whole Union, accompanied by estimates and statistical tables, when he believed there was no power in either House to adopt any part of it!"

The debate was continued by several brief and rapid rejoinders to each other, diminishing in sharpness and asperity, and ended in a semblance of good nature and suavity, soon, however, to be renewed with greatly increased acerbity.

The circumstances which occasioned this memorable gladiatorial grapple were well calculated to excite provocation in Mr. Clay. The two distinguished Senators and their respective friends had for years made vigorous and powerful assaults upon the administration of General Jackson, and by their "joint attacks," as Mr. Calhoun said in his Edgefield letter, "had effectually brought down the power of the Executive." . . . "And it was clear that with our joint forces we could utterly overthrow and demolish them; but it was not less clear that *the victory would inure not to us, but exclusively to the benefit of our allies and their cause.*" Suddenly, therefore, and without even a parting *good-by,* he left his "allies," and went straightway to the camp of their joint opponents, throwing a Parthian arrow back, as a

parting present, in the form of an imputation on their patriotism. "I could not back and sustain those in whose *wisdom, firmness,* and *patriotism* I had no reason to confide." It was not in human nature, certainly not in Mr. Clay's nature, to bear this patiently. He chose to consider this as an assault upon him and his friends, as it really was, and therefore assumed that he was acting on the defensive, while Mr. Calhoun also claimed the same attitude.

Mr. Calhoun had possibly convinced himself, but failed to convince his own colleague (Colonel Preston), much less the country, that in changing the person of the chief magistrate there had been any change of the principles or measures of General Jackson's administration, or that there was any less cause for opposing those principles and measures under Mr. Van Buren than there had been under Andrew Jackson. It was the boast of the former that he was "treading in the footsteps" of the latter in every respect. That he and his party had left General Jackson and gone over to Mr. Calhoun was an assumption only provocative of laughter. But if Mr. Calhoun had suddenly discovered strong inducements for him to get back into the Democratic party, and was resolved to place himself there, what better reason could he give for so suddenly marching out of the camp of his allies into that of his enemies than he did give?

But, able as Mr. Calhoun certainly was, he found an antagonist in Mr. Clay too adroit and ready for him. He required time to prepare his matter and arrange his ideas,—even to select his words. Mr. Clay did not; at least in a personal controversy. As he said, he was self-poised, ever ready; he could fire off-hand without rest. Mr. Calhoun, on the contrary, must have time to load and take deliberate aim. In doing so he was sure to hit and penetrate the most vulnerable part of his antagonist; but while he was doing this, his antagonist would have hit him in half a dozen places.

Colonel Benton has given a very just and impartial account of this passage at arms.

"This contest," he says, "between two eminent men, on a theatre so elevated, in which the stake to each was so great,

and in which each did his best, conscious that the eye of the age and of posterity was upon him, was an event in itself, and in their lives. It abounded with exemplifications of all the different sorts of oratory of which each was master: on one side, declamation, impassioned eloquence, vehement invective, taunting sarcasm; on the other, close reasoning, chaste narrative, clear statement, keen retort."

The sympathy of much the greater portion of the audience, and of the country, in this contest, was with Mr. Clay. Mr. Calhoun could not but feel this, and the greater necessity it imposed on him of putting forth his whole powers. He had to place himself right before the country and posterity; he had to justify his course, and repel the imputation of abandoning patriotic and acting upon purely selfish motives. He stood in and before the American Senate, where he had himself presided for nearly eight years and been one of its most honored members. He appealed to Senators, long his associates, as his judges, and to the American people, who were equally his judges.

Mr. Clay, too, felt that he and his friends had been falsely and needlessly accused of want of *patriotism, wisdom, and firmness*, and that his accuser had made a boast of dictating terms to him, and of overthrowing his favorite "American system," when in truth he was in the power and might have been the victim of the wrath of General Jackson, and was rescued by Mr. Clay. This ungrateful return provoked resentment, and justified retort; and he allowed no account of that kind to stand against him unsettled.

Mr. Clay had clearly the advantage of Mr. Calhoun in this controversy, in this, that he was always ready, had all his resources at command, and could marshal them at a moment's warning against his antagonist. He was, especially when roused, more powerful in retort, or reply, than in an attack. The spur of provocation was to him what the spur of Purdy was to Eclipse in his great contest with Henry: it brought out powers which would otherwise not have been exerted. Mr. Calhoun was not a ready debater, but required time to prepare himself.

The idea has been lately thrown out that all our great speakers invariably prepared, by writing out and committing to memory, their most elaborate and what seemed to be impromptu speeches; that their sudden bursts and flashing streams of eloquence were all prepared with great labor beforehand, and kept for a proper occasion.

This is true in part, but not wholly true. Undoubtedly our most able and ready orators prepared themselves for the occasion when they intended to address the body of which they were members: it was due to that body that they should do so. Such was the practice of Demosthenes, and of Æschines, his rival; of Cicero, of Burke, and perhaps of most great orators; but they did not read their speeches to those whom they addressed. But many of Mr. Clay's oratorical efforts were wholly spontaneous, inspired by the occasion, and thrown off in the heat of conflict.

The custom has prevailed in the Senate and House of Representatives, for twenty-five years past, of members reading their speeches, written out for the occasion. Such was not formerly the usage; and if a member had attempted it forty years ago he would not only not have been listened to, but would probably have excited general laughter. Nothing has ever been more attractive to the people of Washington and afforded them higher or more rational enjoyment than to listen to a warm debate upon some great and exciting question, carried on by the able speakers of Congress; or to some sharp and spicy conflict in which each speaker, like the wrestlers of old, exerts every nerve to get the better of his antagonist or antagonists. In such conflicts, or in the discussion of great and complicated questions, what part can he take whose powers, if he have any, are not at his command, and who must first take time to write out his thoughts, and then read them?

But to be able to participate in discussions of this kind, the member must have a thorough knowledge of the subject in all its relations and bearings, and the principles and questions of constitutional and statute law involved in it. Take, as an illustration, the great debate between Mr. Webster and Mr. Hayne. As the former had but a few hours to prepare, what would his

reply have amounted to had he not been already fully imbued and conversant with the whole subject under debate?

The ready debaters in the Senate during Mr. Adams's, General Jackson's, and Mr. Van Buren's administrations, besides Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Calhoun (for I must rank him as one, though not equal in this respect to many others), were Mr. Crittenden, Mr. Choate, Mr. Chambers, of Maryland, Silas Wright, John M. Clayton, Robert Y. Hayne, John Forsyth, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Grundy, Mr. Mangum, Mr. Berrien, Mr. Rives, of Virginia, Mr. Barton, of Missouri, Mr. Benton, Mr. John Davis, Mr. Phelps, of Vermont, and perhaps one or two others. Mr. Crittenden was always most happy in reply; and I doubt whether he ever wrote one of his speeches, before or after delivery. No Senator ever knocked at his door and found him unprepared: if sharply assailed, his opponent failed not to feel the force of his logic, the aptitude of his illustration, and the pungency of his sarcasm. Yet, with all his earnest and sometimes biting, sometimes playful eloquence, he never left a sting behind or excited an unkind feeling. Nothing delighted him more than a playful tilt with some member who could tilt back, —a game of small sword,—and especially with Mr. Buchanan, who, though he could handle the small sword, made few hits, but got many from the adroit Kentucky Senator.

In the House, during the period I speak of, the most effective and ready debaters were John Randolph, Henry R. Storrs, Mr. McDuffie, Mr. Cambreling, Tristam Burgess, of Rhode Island, John C. Wright, of Ohio, John Quincy Adams and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, George Evans, of Maine, Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Mitchell, Warren R. Davis, and Colonel Drayton, of South Carolina, Robert P. Letcher and Thomas Marshall, of Kentucky, Philip Doddridge, Charles Fenton Mercer, John M. Patton, and Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, Joseph Vance and Samuel F. Vinton, of Ohio, Richard Henry Wilde, of Georgia, Dixon H. Lewis, of Alabama, and Edward Stanley, of North Carolina.

Not one of these ever read a speech in Congress, or conceived that such a thing could be done; and, of course, not one of them ever asked to have a speech written out and partially

delivered, or not delivered at all, published as if it had been! These men met one another face to face, and discussed the subject under debate.

Such discussions are now seldom heard. Such oratorical conflicts as frequently occurred between Mr. Adams and Mr. Wise, Mr. Adams and Mr. Marshall, or Mr. Rhett, or Mr. Gilmer, or between Mr. Randolph and Mr. Burgess, or Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, are almost as rare at this day as a real tournament of mediæval times.*

MR. WEBSTER AGAINST THE SUB-TREASURY BILL.

Mr. Webster discussed the Sub-Treasury bill with the ability of a statesman and the candor and good temper of a judge. He pointed out the evils the policy of the preceding administration had brought upon the country, and reminded the authors of this measure, who stood pledged to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, of the predictions which had foretold the present condition of the country, made by himself and his associates, proving that they foresaw what the result of those ruinous "experiments" must be.

In addressing the Senate in opposition to this measure, Mr. Webster came in conflict with Mr. Calhoun, between whom and himself occurred a memorable passage at arms, provoked, as that between Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun was, by the defection of the latter, and growing legitimately out of the comments which Mr. Webster felt called on to make upon some portion of Mr. Calhoun's speech and Edgefield letter.

Mr. Calhoun having in his speech at the September called session said that in 1824, the tariff system having triumphed in Congress, he and his friends rallied on the Presidential election to arrest it through the influence of the Executive department of the government, but that they failed in that, and then fell back upon the rights of the States, and through the potency of State interposition brought the system to the ground, Mr. Webster seized upon this for comment. Here was, he said, an open and direct avowal that in rallying to elect General Jackson

* It is the rule of the British Parliament that no member shall read a speech. It should be the rule of Congress.

in 1824–25 the purpose was to overthrow the protective policy of the country. Well, this was frank, and he was glad the avowal had been made. But the Senator had allies: was the object he had avowed as his motive common to all? Did he tell Pennsylvania—honest, straightforward Pennsylvania—that such was his purpose? Did he state his object to New York and New Jersey? Ye who supported Jackson in those States, what say you? was *that* your object, or did you know it was the purpose, the main purpose, of this honorable Senator? Mr. Webster then spoke of the "judicious tariff" General Jackson was represented to be in favor of, as all were, though each had the reserved right to define for himself what a "judicious tariff" was. At any rate, it was a boat broad enough to carry the whole crew; and all rushed and scrambled into it.

These criticisms upon Mr. Calhoun's declarations and boastings, though severe, were legitimate and just, and Mr. Calhoun felt them all the more keenly for the good temper in which they were made. Mr. Webster showed that he and his friends had acted from motives which they dared not at the time avow to their allies,—allies to whom they were hostile.

Mr. Webster compared the Edgefield letter to a military dispatch: it was full of attacks, assaults, repulses, movements and counter-movements, of occupying positions, falling back. The celerity of all these operations reminded one of the rapidity of the movements of the King of Prussia in the Seven Years' War; though he did not anywhere read of Frederick's achievements in taking a position to cover an enemy or hold an ally in check. These refined tactics are of more recent discovery.

These remarks of Mr. Webster, made in perfect good temper, with the dry, sarcastic humor pervading them, were exceedingly provocative of laughter, and even grave Senators, Mr. Calhoun himself, could not restrain its indulgence.

Mr. Webster then spoke of the sudden movement of the Senator which landed him in the camp of his former enemies. This seemed very abrupt. Sudden movements of the affections, whether personal or political, are out of nature.

He referred to a mock-play written in England by some wit to ridicule the *sentimentality* of a certain German school of liter-

ature. Two strangers meet at an inn: suddenly one springs up and exclaims, "A sudden thought strikes me. Let us swear eternal friendship!" The offer was instantly accepted.

Mr. Webster graphically described the contest in which he and his friends and the Senator and his friends were and had long been engaged, and when victory was at last apparently in their grasp, the Senator cries out to his enemies, "Halloo! a sudden thought strikes me. I abandon my allies! They have always been my oppressors! Let you and I swear eternal friendship!"

The utterance of these humorous but cutting remarks was inimitable, and, spite of the Vice-President's gavel, "brought down the house." Coming from the grave and dignified Webster, whose face was never guilty of anything more than a smile, the very dignity of the speaker added to the pungency of their sarcasm and drollery, and made laughter the more irresistible and irrepressible.

Mr. Calhoun felt, but endeavored to "bear the brunt" of, this refined ridicule and keen irony, with all becoming dignity, pretending, as it were, not to feel the barbed shaft.

In his conflict with Calhoun, Mr. Webster exhibited powers totally unlike those he usually displayed in his oratory, and for which he had never before had credit. In this he showed that his wit was as keen as his logic was conclusive; that he could see the ridiculous, and was as complete a master of refined and cutting ridicule as he was of the ponderous weapons of argument and illustration, the force of which few could resist. His wit, however, was a sub-acid: tart, but pleasant, and free from that pungent bitterness which comes from an overflow of gall and provokes revenge rather than pleasant laughter.

Unlike Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster, Mr. Calhoun was utterly destitute both of wit and of humor, and was probably never, in his whole life, guilty of perpetrating a joke or uttering a pleasantry. He was too intensely in earnest in everything he did to joke or trifle, or to indulge in the luxury of a laugh.

Considering the facts that he had long been estranged from the Presidential mansion, that he had been an object of most virulent abuse by the organ of the administration, and had been

spoken of contemptuously and scurrilously by those most intimate at the White House, it could not but excite surprise when it was first whispered, and then known, that there had been a kind of love-feast made by the President on his account, a killing of the fatted calf, and great rejoicing at the return of the prodigal son. On that occasion, rumor stated, there was a general shaking of hands, smoking the calumet of peace, and burying the tomahawk, which had been so freely and savagely used during the past seven years.

Mr. Clay took what he thought a fit occasion to allude to this rumored love-feast and peace-making, and intimated that the country would be glad to know what the relationship of the high contracting parties really was, and whether measures proposed by the Senator from South Carolina were to be considered administration measures.

Mr. Calhoun was taunted into a somewhat tart reply, and Mr. Clay drew from him the confession, or avowal, that he had visited the President, and that personal friendly relations between them had been re-established. The colloquy, or debate, became altogether personal, and very sharp; but their personal relations after this gradually became more agreeable, though their former status was never fully restored.

The Sub-Treasury bill passed the Senate, after very elaborate debate, by a vote of 27 to 25, but was laid on the table in the House, by 106 to 98. This was followed, not long after, by the passage—34 to 10—of a joint resolution, introduced by Mr. Clay, but modified and amended, repealing the obnoxious "Specie Circular," which was considered so prolific of mischief to the whole country, as well as to the President and his party politically.

Simultaneously with the repeal of the Specie Circular, the banks in the Northern States resumed specie payments; both events creating great rejoicing and relief.

ABOLITION PETITIONS.

The question of the reception of Abolition petitions came up in the Senate and in the House on the same day, December 20, 1837. In the former an animated debate arose, in which a

large number of Senators took part. In the House one of those *scenes* occurred which were not unfrequent in that body,—a sort of gust, or whirlwind, that threatened more harm than was done, and was productive of more noise, confusion, and dust than good.

In the Senate, Mr. Wall, of New Jersey, having presented petitions to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, Mr. King, of Alabama, raised the question of reception.

Mr. Grundy then moved to lay that question on the table, but withdrew it at the request of Mr. Clay, who desired to inquire whether the feeling on this exciting subject was not on the increase in the non-slaveholding States,—whether many persons at the North had not been prompted to sign these petitions by the idea that the sacred right of petition had been invaded by the course pursued by Congress at the last session in relation to these petitions?

Mr. Clay said his opinions were known and unchanged. He thought Congress ought not to grant the prayer of the petitioners; but he was in favor of the proposition made on a former occasion by Mr. Tyler, namely, to refer the petitions to the committee on the District of Columbia, who should report thereon. This, he thought, would calm the public mind, and restore the tranquillity so much desired.

Mr. Calhoun was averse to this: the only way to stop them was to meet them at the doors and keep them out. He was opposed to compromise, and hoped gentlemen would yield nothing.

Mr. Swift, of Vermont, reminded gentlemen that when these memorials were received and referred there was little excitement on the subject. The petitioners were not, as they had been called, miserable fanatics, but included the most respectable and intelligent of the community.

Mr. Davis, of Massachusetts, repeated what he had said two years ago: "If you want to make Abolitionists, continue the course you have been pursuing."

Mr. King, of Alabama, denounced the petitioners with great vehemence, as miserable fanatics and weak women, who could be easily wrought upon. "If the North will persevere in this

hostile course, then," said Mr. King, "we will separate from them."

The debate finally took the character of a personal encounter between Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun. It was quite evident that the latter was desirous to place the former in an antagonistic position to the South, or at least to have it appear to the South that Mr. Clay was more of a Northern than Southern man, while he, Mr. Calhoun, was the special friend and advocate of the South, as he really was.

He did not care how his course might affect the North. He gave that section up, but was anxious to keep the keenest sensibility of the South awakened to these attacks. While he disclaimed acting on sectional grounds, he avowed his desire to unite the South, to make her a unit, on this question.

Mr. Clay was also anxious to promote union,—not the union of a section, but the union of all the States, that they might be "now and forever indivisible." *He* did not look to the section from which he came. He wished to tranquillize and harmonize the whole country, not to create or foster heart-burnings and jealousies between different portions of it.

Speaking of this debate, and of the sentiments expressed by Mr. Clay therein, the New York "Evening Post," a very decided Democratic paper, said, "In this debate Mr. Clay set an example which we should rejoice to see imitated by his brethren of the South,—an example not of morbid sensitiveness on a painful subject, but a manly reliance on the good sense and intelligence and justice of the people."

ANOTHER EXCITING SCENE IN THE HOUSE.

While the debate on Abolition was going on in the Senate, the same subject occupied the House, where a scene characteristic of that body when stirred by an Abolition gust occurred, occupying nearly the whole day.

Mr. Slade, of Vermont, having presented memorials for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, addressed the House on the subject, and, in the course of his remarks, animadverted on the course pursued by Southern members in regard to memorials on this subject, it appearing to be the

understanding that some one would invariably rise and move to lay all motions for referring such memorials on the table.

Mr. Slade continued, commenting on the course pursued towards these memorials, and attempting to discuss the subject of slavery, but was frequently called to order.

Either from a desire to irritate Southern members, or from the unfortunate talent he had of using, unconsciously, offensive terms and making annoying and provoking remarks, he succeeded in getting up great irritation and excitement, out of which grew disorder and confusion, a dozen members attempting to address the chair, and nearly all of them on their feet.

At length Mr. Wise, greatly excited, hallooed to the Virginia delegation to retire from the hall. Mr. Holsey, of Georgia, made the same request to the Georgia delegation.

Mr. Rhett said that the South Carolina members had already consulted together and had agreed to meet in the room of the District committee.

Mr. Slade, being decided to be out of order, resumed his seat, whereupon a motion was made and carried, it being late, to adjourn. Most of the Southern members had already left the hall.

MEETING OF SOUTHERN MEMBERS.

A meeting of Southern Senators and members of the House was held in the evening. The attendance was large, all from the slaveholding States being present except Mr. Clay and Mr. Benton. Among those who spoke at the meeting were Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Preston, Mr. Crittenden, and Mr. Rives, of the Senate, and Messrs. Wise, Menifee, and others of the House. All were in a high state of ebullition; members making inflammatory remarks, uttering denunciations of the North, and threats of disunion.

The result of the meeting was a resolution, to be offered in the House the next morning, which was afterwards known as "the Patton resolution," from its being offered by Mr. Patton, of Virginia.

At the meeting of the House the next morning Mr. Patton moved a suspension of the rules to enable him to offer the

resolution. They were suspended by a two-thirds vote, and the resolution passed, as follows:

"*Resolved*, That all petitions, memorials, and papers touching the abolition of slavery, or the buying, selling, or transferring of slaves, in any district or territory of the United States, be laid upon the table without being debated, printed, read, or referred, and that no further action whatever shall be had thereon."

When Mr. Adams's name was called, on the passage of the resolution, he rose, and, amidst loud cries of "Order!" "order!" "order!" said, "I hold the resolution to be a violation of the Constitution of the United States" ("Order!" "order!" "order!"), "of the right of petition" ("Order!"), "and of freedom of speech to myself as a member of this House." Mr. Adams persisted in uttering these words amidst a pandemonium of cries of *order.*

Mr. Adams asked to have this declaration inserted on the journal, which was refused; but the next morning he moved to amend the journal by inserting the words—repeated in his resolution; and this was effected by a vote of the House, on motion of Mr. Bynum, of North Carolina, to lay it on the table, —an effect the opposite of what he intended.

At the meeting of the Southern members which agreed to the Patton resolution, another was also adopted, which Mr. Calhoun very earnestly advocated; namely, that the delegation from each slaveholding State should appoint one member to form a general committee, whose duty it should be to consider and decide upon what *ulterior steps* should be taken to prevent the infraction of the rights of the South.

This was one of the incipient movements which were followed by various disunion State conventions,—conventions that threatened the dissolution of the Union, and which finally culminated in the Rebellion.

The debate on the slavery question was kept up for several days by the introduction of a series of resolutions upon the subject by Mr. Calhoun, and a counter-series by Mr. Morris, of Ohio. But the debate had no special significance.

THE CILLEY-GRAVES DUEL.

Since the lamentable and fatal duel between Barron and Decatur, in March, 1820, no event had created such a sensation in Washington as the duel between Graves and Cilley, in which the latter was killed.

It is not my purpose to give an account of that tragic affair: that can be found authentically given by the seconds of the two combatants in the papers of the day.

The duel was fought between two gentlemen whose personal relations were altogether of a friendly character; and this was one of the strange things about this universally-condemned conflict. The question naturally arises, If there was no enmity between them, why did they fight? Answer: they fought on a point of honor; both were desirous to avoid the conflict, but neither was willing to say that which would meet the point of honor tenaciously insisted on by the other.

Mr. Cilley, member of Congress from New Hampshire, had been challenged by Colonel J. Watson Webb, editor of the New York "Courier and Enquirer," the challenge being borne by Mr. Graves, member of Congress from Kentucky. Mr. Cilley refused to accept the challenge, alleging that Colonel Webb was not a gentleman. This, according to the dueling code, or "code of honor," imposed upon Mr. Graves the necessity of taking Colonel Webb's place and giving the challenge himself. Had Mr. Cilley put his refusal on the ground that he, as a member of Congress, was not answerable for words spoken in debate, as Mr. Graves desired, it would have relieved the latter from his unpleasant position; but he persistently refused to do this, and the challenge was sent, accepted, and rifles chosen as the weapons.

The reason why Mr. Cilley chose the rifle was that he was a practiced marksman with that weapon, being considered "a dead shot." Mr. Cilley had brought his own rifle with him from New Hampshire, and report said that he rather desired to meet one of "the Southern chivalry" on the field of honor; that he thought Northern members had been "backed down" too often by the gasconaders of the South, who took advantage

of the fact that public opinion at the North so severely condemned dueling that the Northern man who fought a duel committed political suicide, even should he escape death in the conflict.

Mr. Graves, though a Kentuckian, had never fired a rifle, as he assured me, up to the time of the acceptance of the challenge, and was, therefore, no marksman; indeed, he was as great a novice in the use of the weapon as one could be.

Three shots were exchanged. Between the second and third, efforts were made to settle the matter. Mr. Cilley was asked to say, in writing, what he had said verbally to Mr. Graves; namely, "that he declined to receive the note of Colonel Webb because he was not accountable for words spoken in debate," or "that in declining to receive the note he did not do so upon the ground of personal objection to Colonel Webb as a gentleman;" but this was declined, and the third exchange of shots followed, when Mr. Cilley fell, by what Mr. Graves always said was a chance shot.

At the second exchange of shots, after Mr. Graves's rifle had gone off accidentally, according to the statement made by Mr. Wise to the committee of investigation, Mr. Cilley fired deliberately "at his life," and his second expected to see him fall. Mr. Wise also charged that Mr. Cilley "precipitated the time of meeting when the second of Mr. Graves was avowing a want of preparation (not being able immediately to procure a rifle) and a desire for delay." The meeting being thus hastened and "precipitated," Mr. Graves had no time to practice or become familiar with the weapon he had on the spur of the occasion procured.

Had Mr. Cilley fired in the air instead of deliberately firing at Mr. Graves, at the second exchange of shots, after Mr. Graves's rifle had gone off accidentally, the duel would have ended there. Not having done so, but seeming to desire to take Mr. Graves's life, another exchange was demanded, which, contrary to expectation, proved fatal to Mr. Cilley.

The news of the death of Cilley reached Washington early in the morning, producing a great sensation, especially among members of Congress.

The House was too much agitated on that day to transact business, and little was done. Members were seen grouped together in different parts of the hall, discussing the melancholy event, the more lamented as Mr. Cilley and Mr. Graves were both highly esteemed.

That two men between whom there existed no unkind feeling should be drawn by untoward circumstances into deadly conflict, one of them falling a victim to this "code of honor," could not but produce a shock to the feelings of every one not a professed duelist, and these feelings found free utterance, though not in condemnation of Mr. Graves. Nor was the excitement produced confined to Washington: it pervaded the country. The press, not knowing whom especially to cast censure upon, condemned every one connected with the transaction.

All the actors in this affair have long since gone to their rest, except the two seconds, Governor Wise, of Virginia, and General Jones, of Iowa.

ARRIVAL EXTRAORDINARY.

Those of the present generation, who have not lived half the allotted days of man, and who are as familiar with the arrival and departure at our ports of ocean steamers—"leviathans of the deep"—as with the rising and setting of the sun, can have but a faint idea of the sensation created by the arrival of the first two steamers at New York from Liverpool. The first arrival was that of the Sirius, on the 22d of April, 1838, the second, the Great Western, on the 23d. Though the latter had been expected and was daily looked for, her arrival created a tremendous furor in the city, and made a great sensation throughout the country. A great problem had been solved, a grand experiment successfully tried, at the very moment when a celebrated philosopher (Dr. D. Lardner) was demonstrating and thought he had demonstrated that the thing was impossible.

No conquering hero was ever more demonstratively welcomed or lionized than the master of the Great Western. Why *he* should be more than the master of the Sirius, which came first in the order of time, I am unable to say, but so it was.

The Great Western was *the* steamer, while the other was scarcely heard of; indeed, few ever heard of her at all.

But ocean steam navigation was no longer a problem to be solved. It was now "a fixed fact," *un fait accompli.* The rejoicing on this occasion was not excelled even by that created by the reception of the first telegraphic dispatch by the cable from England, that of Queen Victoria to the President of the United States.

Nor were the demonstrations made on her departure less marked and enthusiastic than those on her arrival. A fleet of steamers, decorated with flags, filled with passengers, and each having a band of music on board, assembled around, and accompanied her down the bay. The wharves were densely crowded with spectators, and even the house-tops were covered. On her leaving her wharf and heading down the bay, cheers went up from tens of thousands of excited people as a parting God-speed.

THE BURNING OF PENNSYLVANIA HALL.

Opposition to slavery, styled in common parlance "Abolitionism," which was a spectre of evil import to the South, and was earnestly, and in many instances violently, opposed at the North, continued to increase. Public sentiment was undoubtedly against the Abolitionists in all parts of the country, but so strongly in the slave States that it was dangerous for one known as such to appear there. Looked upon as they were as disturbers of the peace and harmony of the country, as interfering with that which did not belong to them and with which they had no right to meddle, it is easy to infer that no one joined and acted with them but such as were largely endowed with moral courage, and governed by a full conviction of what was *right* and their *duty*, rather than by that prudence which looks only to what is expedient or popular. They were men and women of stern resolution and inflexible purpose. Ridicule could not penetrate this moral armor, nor denunciation swerve them from their purpose. They feared neither the condemnation of public opinion nor the threats of personal violence.

A hall had been erected in Philadelphia by the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania, intended for "free discussion;" which had become a necessity to this class of people, since they could find few places open to them for discussing the subject of slavery.

This ("Pennsylvania Hall") was to be dedicated; and to take part in the ceremonies a large number of Abolitionists, some of the most prominent in the country, assembled from different States. The address on the occasion was delivered by Mr. Garrison, the well-known Abolition editor of Boston. Other addresses were also made.

Meantime, a certain portion of the people of Philadelphia became excited at the presence of so many Abolitionists in the city; but it is probable that this excitement would have found relief in denunciatory expletives but for an exhibition on their part which was then entirely novel and strongly repugnant to the general sense of propriety of the community, and which seemed to be done in utter disregard of that general feeling, if not purposely to defy it: namely, the indiscriminate commingling of the whites and blacks,—white men walking the streets arm-in-arm with black women, and white women with black men. This public demonstration by the Abolitionists of their ideas of the equality of all men aroused deep-seated prejudices, and greatly moved the more impulsive part of the community. A large crowd of boys and "loafers" had hung around the hall from the beginning; but at night on the 16th of May an immense mob gathered and soon gave indications of intended mischief. Colored men were attacked wherever found. The crowd became boisterous and threatening. Colonel Swift, the mayor, appeared with a body of police and endeavored to disperse the mob, but was unable to do so. Finally, the doors of the hall were forced open, and many entered, but at first contented themselves with tearing up the benches and throwing them and the chairs out of the windows. But this accomplished, fire was set to the building, which was soon enveloped in flames.

Firemen, with their engines and hose, were soon on the spot and "made believe" to play on the building. It was evident,

however, that it was not their purpose to save it, and it was entirely consumed.

The firemen showed a different feeling when the house of a poor woman, near the hall, took fire, and played upon it with such earnestness and vigor that it was saved. Moreover, in order to cover the damage done to the poor woman's house, the sum of fifty dollars was raised among them and paid over to her.

The burning of Pennsylvania Hall was, like the destruction of the press and type and the killing of Mr. Lovejoy, at Alton, one of those violent outbreaks which almost invariably occur in the progress of great reformations, or the abolishing of usages to which a people have for generations been accustomed, even though wrong and, to a portion of the community, oppressive. All such outbreaks, however, do but promote the cause they are intended to injure; as the burning of religious martyrs only tended to make converts,—Luther, Calvin, John Knox, and other reformers.

Abolition publications were now scattered broadcast North and South, and greatly excited the people of the latter section, who sought through their representatives in Congress to prohibit all "incendiary publications," as they styled them, from being transported in the United States mails. Mr. Calhoun brought forward and earnestly advocated the passage of such a bill, which was opposed by Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay, and failed. But the Postmaster-General, Amos Kendall, signified to a Southern postmaster that he might refuse to deliver such "incendiary papers," he assuming the responsibility of so doing, the Postmaster-General having no authority in the premises.

Men of very ordinary understanding could not fail to see that if the officers of the government could, under any pretense whatever, exercise such a power over the mails as to withhold or deliver any publication sent therein at their option, the freedom of the press would henceforth be nothing but a name, a mere shadow without substance. Mr. Kendall's letter struck the public mind at the North with a force that stirred thousands to action who had never sympathized with the Abolitionists, and who were even opposed to their movements.

TEXAS.

The independence of the republic of Texas was recognized by Congress at the session of 1836–7, and a minister, Memucan Hunt, was sent here. He soon, on behalf of Texas, proposed annexation; but public sentiment at the North was decidedly averse to this.

In January, 1838, Mr. Preston, of South Carolina, presented to the Senate a resolution, prefaced by a preamble setting forth that the true boundary of the United States, under the treaty of Louisiana, extended to the Rio del Norte, which river continued to be the boundary-line until the territory west of the Sabine was *surrendered* to Spain by the treaty of 1819, and declaring it, for many weighty reasons set forth, expedient to *re-establish* the said true boundary, and to *re-annex* to the United States the territory occupied by the State of Texas, with the consent of said State; "*therefore*," his resolution declared, "it is desirable and expedient to re-annex the said territory to the United States."

At the same time the subject of annexation came up in the House by the presentation of memorials against annexing Texas to the United States.

As Mr. Preston had in his preamble cast severe reflection upon the treaty with Spain of 1819, commonly called "the Florida Treaty," and as Mr. Adams was the negotiator on behalf of the United States on that occasion, he could not be indifferent to this movement to "re-annex" the country lost, or given up, by that treaty, to the United States. When, therefore, remonstrances were presented in the House against such *re*-annexation, Mr. Adams moved to refer them to a special committee, and supported his motion in one of his characteristic, able, historically interesting, and outspoken speeches. The subject was disposed of, however, by a motion to lay it on the table, which prevailed by a vote of 127 to 68.

Mr. Preston could not have been aware, when he made his remarks upon the treaty of 1819, that Mr. Adams, a Northern man, was the only one of Mr. Monroe's cabinet—which included Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun—who opposed the giving up so large a portion of Texas to Spain; which fact

Mr. Adams, in self-defense, brought out, greatly to the astonishment of Southern men.

As the South desired the annexation for the purpose of extending the area of slavery, the agitation of this question tended to aggravate the already highly feverish state of feeling on the subject of slavery in both sections of the Union. But the South was destined to triumph in the end, and in connection with that triumph to defeat both Clay and Van Buren as candidates for the Presidency.

MISSISSIPPI CONTESTED ELECTION.—SARGENT S. PRENTISS.

Upon the issuing of a proclamation by President Van Buren, calling an extra session of Congress in the fall of 1837, Mississippi being without members, the governor of that State, Charles Lynch, issued writs to the sheriffs to hold an election for representatives to fill the vacancy "until superseded by the members to be elected at the next regular election, on the first Monday and day following in November next." At this election, in July, Messrs. Claiborne and Gholson were the successful candidates.

At the regular State election in November, Sargent S. Prentiss and Thomas J. Word were elected by large majorities. Meantime, the House of Representatives assumed to itself the extraordinary power to pass a resolution declaring Claiborne and Gholson to be duly elected members for the whole term of the Twenty-fifth Congress. Consequently, when Messrs. Prentiss and Word presented themselves to the House and claimed their seats, they were already occupied. The question then arose as to whom the seats rightfully belonged; and this question was discussed with great vehemence for more than two weeks. All the powers of eloquence, all the skill of party tactics, and all the energies inspired by the hope of a political victory and the fear of political defeat, were called into requisition on this occasion. As the question before the House was to determine whether the State of Mississippi should be represented by two Whigs or two Democrats, and as the decision of this might affect the decision of other questions, both parties felt a deep interest in its result. It was treated as a strict party

question, though after the lapse of thirty-four years, and the clearing away of the fogs of passion and prejudice which then obscured the vision of members, one can but wonder how it could have been made a question at all, a bare statement of it being equal to a demonstration.

Mr. Prentiss was one of those extraordinary men who appear upon earth at distant intervals, as if Nature, in creating them, expended all her powers, and had, from necessity, to content herself, for many years, with producing ordinary men. A lawyer by profession, a scholar by study, an orator by nature; with a big, towering head, and a great, noble heart.

But these general terms, though they indicate a man of far more than ordinary abilities, convey no definite idea of the individual.

His first appearance in the House of Representatives was as a claimant of a seat in that body as a representative of Mississippi. A day was set for him to address the House in support of his and his colleague's claim to seats in the place of Claiborne and Gholson. His fame as an orator had preceded him, and on the day he was to address the House the galleries were early filled, in great part by ladies. While he was speaking, there gathered into the hall an audience such as Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Preston, Pitt, or Fox might have been proud to attract,—Senators, ex-members of Congress, foreign ministers, eminent lawyers attending the session of the Supreme Court, and distinguished citizens of Washington.

There was something at once so attractive and impressive in his appearance, that on rising every eye was upon him, and intense silence pervaded the hall. Yet, imposing as was the assembly, and novel the scene before and around him, he was perfectly self-possessed, calm, and collected, as if he were merely performing his accustomed duties in a familiar court.

Mr. Wise, who was present and participated in this celebrated debate, says, in his reminiscence of the subject of these remarks, "He threw himself on the arena at a single bound, but not in the least like a harlequin. He stepped, no stranger, on the boards of high debate. . . . I never shall forget the feelings he inspired, and the triumph he won. . . .

"He at once, after this first effort, ascended to his pinnacle of place in the House of Representatives."

Mr. Fillmore, who was a member of the House of Representatives, writes, in 1853, "I can never forget that speech. It was, certainly, the most brilliant that I ever heard, and, as a whole, I think it fully equaled, if it did not exceed, any rhetorical effort to which it has been my good fortune to listen in either House of Congress. It elevated him at once to the first rank of Congressional orators, and stamped his short but brilliant parliamentary career with the impression of undoubted genius and the highest oratorical powers."

Mr. Calhoun, who occupied a seat near Mr. Prentiss, and listened to him with the most intense interest, being three times notified by a page that he was needed in the Senate, ere he could forego the pleasure of listening, rose, and, as he turned to go out, exclaimed, in an audible voice to some friends whom he passed, "Splendid! *splendid!* SPLENDID!"

Mr. Webster, who listened to Mr. Prentiss's whole speech, replied, when asked his opinion of it, "Nobody can equal it."

Mr. Prentiss's speech ran into the third day; but instead of the interest he created flagging, it increased every day; the desire to hear him became more and more intense, and the galleries and hall more and more crowded.

The debate continued for a week or two after he spoke first; Mr. Legaré, of South Carolina, closing the debate on the side adverse to Prentiss and Word. Mr. Legaré was one of the brilliant stars of that Congress; a man of profound scholarship, a most able jurist, and a chaste, beautiful speaker. He, too, attracted crowds to the galleries and hall; but he had a bad cause, and did not come up to his own standard.

Mr. Prentiss was allowed to reply to Mr. Legaré. He loved a foeman worthy of his steel, and the reputation of Mr. Legaré, the high estimation in which he was justly held, were but stimulants to him. "Nothing," says his brother and biographer, "called out the whole of his intellectual resources like strong opposition; and he never used them with greater skill or effect than at retort."

A vote was at length taken, and resulted in the House de-

claring the July election, when Claiborne and Gholson were returned, void, by a vote of 119 to 112. Claiborne and Gholson were therefore unseated, and no one, apparently, doubted but that Prentiss and Word, who were regularly elected at the regular November State election, would now take their seats. All waited in expectancy of a vote declaring them entitled to their seats, when up sprang a Mr. Howard, of Maryland, immortalized, if at all, by this single act, and implored the House to pause. Some frivolous reason was given, but in such a beseeching, nervous manner, that, coming from a well-known friend of the administration, the party rallied to his support, and the proposition to declare the claimants—the only claimants—to the seats, not entitled to them, after some days of vehement debate, was carried by the casting vote of Mr. Speaker Polk. This result was accomplished by the most strenuous efforts of the administration, and the use of every political strategy known to politicians, called into use in desperate cases. The vote of the House stood 117 to 117.

The excitement was intense; the noise and confusion on the taking and declaring the vote, and the indignation felt and manifested upon Mr. Polk's giving the casting vote, were indescribable. Polk himself was, apparently, so intimidated by it that he could hardly speak audibly.

Thus was the long agony of three weeks ended. Mr. Wise instantly rose and poured forth an indignant rebuke. Mr. Prentiss followed, and, in a speech of five minutes, denounced the decision of the House as an act of palpable and gross "legislative usurpation."

But, though defeated, Messrs. Prentiss and Word were not conquered. A new election in Mississippi was ordered, and, before leaving Washington, Mr. Prentiss issued an address to the people of that State, couched in terms calculated to stir every heart in the State.

Proud of one whose fame for oratory had suddenly become co-extensive with the bounds of the Union, the Whigs at Washington gave Mr. Prentiss a dinner soon after his case was decided, which was chiefly remarkable for two things: first, the great number of very eminent men who gathered around

the festive board; and second, for a very extraordinary impromptu speech made by Mr. Webster, on being called upon for a speech on the UNION.

Judge Hugh L. White, very justly styled "the Cato of the country," presided, and retired early. Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, and others had spoken, "but no one," Mr. Wise says, "had come up to their usual standard, and many were disappointed. At length, one who was present relates, Mr. Webster was loudly called upon to address them on the UNION. 'MR. WEBSTER! WEBSTER! The *Union!* the *Union!*' The right chord had been touched; the rock had been struck, and out gushed an overpowering stream of brilliant, soul-stirring thoughts, and as he went on, inspired and warmed by his theme, and animated by the enthusiasm he created, he rose," says Mr. Wise, "to the *empyrean.* He brought forty men to their feet, their hands resting on the table, their eyes gazing at him, and their lips parted, as if they were panting for breath. By-and-by he came to point the speech with its moral, and exclaimed, 'And you, Southern brethren! shall *my* children be aliens to *your* children? Shall *your* children be aliens to *my* children?' This was said so lovingly, and in such an appealing tone, that it brought forth the wildest shouts, and manifestations of fervid patriotism and devotion to the Union, while tears trickled down the manly cheeks of many a one present. This outburst of splendid yet chaste eloquence, it is much to be regretted, was never reported; and to reproduce it was beyond even Mr. Webster's power, unless he could be roused by the same inspiration and stirred by the same attending circumstances."*

Before returning to Mississippi to resume the canvass of the State, Mr. Prentiss visited his mother, sisters, and brothers at Portland, his native place, but stopped a few days at Boston, to be present at a dinner given to Mr. Webster by his fellow-citizens, in Faneuil Hall, where he met Evans, Hoffman, Choate, and other distinguished gentlemen, and, inspired by the genius of the place, and the profound admiration he entertained for "the great expounder of the Constitution," whom all met now to honor, he repeatedly and almost continually "brought

* Wise's Seven Decades.

down the house" with such enthusiastic and prolonged cheers as made "the old cradle" rock.

He proceeded home by water, by the way of New Orleans, entered upon a very exciting and laborious canvass, carried the State, and reappeared in Washington near the last of May, claimed his seat in the House, and was sworn in.

Mr. Prentiss had little taste for public life: it was too confining and monotonous, and did not sufficiently tax the powers of his mind to call them often into vigorous action. The bar was the more congenial sphere for him; but he spoke on several occasions with great eloquence and effect,—once especially in favor of the navy, making an impromptu speech which quite electrified the House. He also addressed the House on the subject of the defalcations of public officers, brought to light by the investigations of a special committee of the House, known as Wise's Committee.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION OF DEFALCATIONS.

The contest between the two political parties which divided the country was at this time carried on with great spirit in Congress and throughout the country. The Whigs were now gaining, and the Democrats losing, ground. The tactics of the former were, to assail their opponents and keep them on the defensive; and they had champions in the House, to say nothing of the Senate, admirably qualified to plan and lead these assaults. Rarely have there been in any one Congress so many men of extraordinary talent and eloquence as were now seen in the House of Representatives.

Among the most important doings of the House of Representatives at this time was the raising of a committee on "the defalcations of [the then] late collector of the port of New York, Samuel Swartwout; and also any defalcations among the collectors, receivers, and disbursers of the public money, which may now exist."

The committee was appointed by the House by ballot, and consisted of Messrs. Harlan, of Kentucky, Curtis, of New York, Wise, of Virginia, Dawson, of Georgia, Smith, of Maine,

Hopkins, of Virginia, Owens, of Georgia, Foster, of New York, and Wagener, of Pennsylvania.

It was raised principally for the investigation of the defalcation of Mr. Swartwout, which was pretty thoroughly exposed, and the means by which he had managed to embezzle so large an amount of money—over twelve hundred thousand dollars—were shown.

This done, the committee entered upon an examination of the defalcations of William M. Price, late District Attorney for the Southern District of New York, then just come to light, which were fully reported by the committee. Swartwout and Price, meantime, had found it convenient to pass over to Europe and spend some time there. Mr. Price's defalcation proved, eventually, to be about seventy-five thousand dollars.

The affairs of these prominent defaulters having been investigated, and their defalcations exposed, the committee took up the reports of the Secretary of the Treasury made at the then present and the past session of Congress, from which a tabular statement was prepared, exhibiting the names of defalcating receivers of public moneys arising from the sales of public lands, with the nature and extent of their defalcations. The committee, upon application, were furnished with the correspondence which had taken place between these defaulting receivers and the Secretary, which proved to be of a unique and extraordinary character, exhibiting an unparalleled amount of cool profligacy and unblushing official turpitude on the part of the public robbers; with such a degree of patience and forbearance, and such a forcible-feeble expostulation with those naughty thieves,—alternately beseeching and threatening,—on the part of Secretary Woodbury, as could only provoke laughter and contempt.

This report, No. 313, third session, Twenty-Fifth Congress, was the most powerful political document used by the Whigs for the overthrow of the Van Buren administration, and probably did more to bring about the political revolution of 1840—at least the exposure of the extensive defalcations of office-holders—than all other causes. It revealed a degree of political depravity and an amount of public robbery quite

astounding, which served to open the eyes of the people who had been sleeping while this thieving had been going on; the total amount being between two and three millions of dollars, —an enormous sum for those days.

It was a fruitful theme of declamation and onslaught by the Whig Hotspurs of the House, who let fly their sharpest arrows and charged with couched lances into the ranks of their opponents with galling effect. Among others, Mr. Prentiss, gallant knight as he was, rode into the arena and challenged all comers.

To him these embezzlements, and especially the correspondence spoken of, were provocative of ridicule, sarcasm, scorn, and scathing denunciation.

There were seventy-five or eighty of these defaulters, several of whom were in Mississippi, and had probably spent some of Uncle Sam's money for which they were now in default in opposing the election of Mr. Prentiss; and this may have been an inducement for him to take part in the debate. The correspondence produced was voluminous, running through a period of time from 1833 to 1838, but all of a similar character, complaining, threatening, beseeching,—beseeching and threatening again and again, by the Secretary, and promises, excuses, —excuses, subterfuges, and promises, reiterated, on the part of the negligent, defaulting officers.

Addressing the committee of the whole, Mr. Prentiss said, "Swartwout has been found out. This is the unpardonable sin. [For which the President had in his message recommended an investigation into his affairs.] Not the *theft*, but the *discovery*, constitutes the crime. If every office-holder's mantle were thrown aside, how many, think you, Mr. Chairman, would be found without a stolen fox fastened to the girdle?"

He continued: "Sir, though little is to be expected from the action of this House, I anticipate much good from the discussion of this subject. This hall is the ear of the nation; what is said here touches the auditory nerve of the whole country. Before this mighty audience do I impeach both the President and Secretary Woodbury. I charge them with knowingly appointing and continuing in office public defaulters,—men who had appropriated the public money to private uses; who had

committed, in office, acts of as great moral turpitude and deserving as much odium as attaches to the case of Swartwout; acts which the President now professes to think deserving of the penitentiary."

He charged the Secretary with willfully conniving at some of the most important defalcations,—with repeated and continued neglect of what he himself asserted to be a *paramount duty*,—with having received and favorably considered correspondence degrading to his high office, and of a corrupt and profligate character.

He took up the cases of the several land-office defaulters, and read and commented on their letters and those of the Secretary, Mr. Woodbury, which, with his comments, excited laughter, shame, and sadness. The bold effrontery and unblushing audacity manifested by the public thieves while carrying on their system of robbery were strongly contrasted with the humble, beseeching, imploring tone of the Secretary, *begging* of them to be good, honest officers, to pay up what they owed, and not to steal any more public money; and threatening them as gently as a sucking dove with removal, but never removing a single one.*

* In speaking of the extraordinary forensic powers of Mr. Prentiss, one cannot but be reminded of another gentleman who was gifted in this respect as few men are gifted, and who was the only man in Mississippi considered able to cope with Mr. Prentiss before a court and jury. I allude to Mr.—now General—Joseph Holt.

The two men were unlike in every respect, except in their great oratorical powers. The one was short in person, and lame; the other tall, large, and well proportioned. The one was brilliant, coruscating; the other shone with an intense but steady light. The one was all animation and action; the other had less action, spoke in a more subdued voice, and to the judges and jury as if his only purpose was to impress and convince them, not the rapt audience listening to and devouring his words.

In the most important causes before the courts of Mississippi, they were almost invariably employed on opposite sides; and when it was known that they were to address a court or jury, the court-house was invariably filled to its utmost capacity. Men traveled hundreds of miles to witness the forensic encounters between these distinguished orators, and considered themselves well paid if they could do so.

Mr. Holt was appointed Secretary of War by Mr. Buchanan, to succeed John B. Floyd, who, after transferring a large amount of cannon and military stores and a hundred and fifty thousand rifles from the arsenals of the North to those of the South, had resigned or fled to join the Rebellion. On entering on his duties he took energetic measures to gather together the little army of the United States,

I cannot refrain from mentioning here that the Secretary sent a special agent down to Mississippi, a Mr. Gareché, to look after these defaulters; that he reported one defaulter, Gordon D. Boyd, who had filled his pockets with over a hundred thousand dollars; but the said agent recommended that he should not be removed from office, *because*, he said, *he has his pockets full now and will not want to speculate any more;* whereas, if he is removed and another appointed, the latter will then fill his pockets! And upon this advice the Secretary retained the thief in office till he voluntarily walked out! This case may very well serve as a sample of the whole.

This famous report, exposing the enormous and multitudinous defalcations, embezzlements, and frauds of the Federal officers, afforded many pegs to hang campaign or electioneering speeches upon, and all the notes of the diapason were sounded upon them. The report itself and the speeches soon filled the country, and no voter in the nation who could read was kept long in ignorance of the facts thus disclosed.

MR. CLAY AND SLAVERY.

The persistent refusal of Congress to receive and refer petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia,

which had been, as if by design, so scattered as to be for some time unavailable, acting cordially in concert with the other new *Union* members of the cabinet, General Dix, Secretary of the Treasury, and Edwin M. Stanton, Attorney-General, who found the government on the downward grade upon which it had been put by the secession members of the cabinet who had now joined the Rebellion. These three gentlemen, of equal ability and patriotism, though they could not induce Mr. Buchanan to take any vigorous measure to put down secession as did General Jackson in 1833, succeeded at least in checking the tendency of the government in the direction in which it had been moving under the imbecile and terribly frightened Buchanan.

Mr. Holt was soon appointed Judge-Advocate-General, under President Lincoln, and still remains Chief of the Bureau of Military Justice.

Since then General Dix has filled a large space in the public eye as an officer in the army and as a civilian. His patriotic order to Mr. Hemphill Jones, "If any man attempts to pull down the flag of the United States, shoot him down in his tracks," is an index of the decision of the man. Ordinarily of a mild disposition and amiable deportment, and withal a sincere and humble Christian, he was a lion when aroused; and his official life, especially as Governor of New York, has shown that, in doing right, he is inflexible.

virtually denying the right of petition, had, as Mr. Davis, of Massachusetts, predicted in the Senate, tended to the rapid increase of Abolitionists at the North, and a more intense feeling on the subject generally. The anti-slavery party was becoming stronger and stronger, and more and more active. At the same time the people of the slave States were equally stirred against Abolitionists and their doings.

In this condition of the two sections, it would naturally be supposed that a statesman ambitious to fill the highest office in the gift of the people would avoid, as much as possible, discussing the question of slavery, pro or con., since whatever sentiments he might avow must displease one section just in proportion as they might be acceptable to the other. It was a two-edged sword.

Mr. Clay, however, felt it due to himself and the country that his sentiments on this agitating subject should not be a matter of conjecture; and he therefore determined to address the Senate, declaring his views in a frank and unreserved manner. He did so on the 7th of February, 1839; but he did no more than reiterate sentiments he had uniformly expressed publicly and privately for more than thirty years,—from his earliest youth. In the course of this speech he adverted to the effort in which he was engaged in Kentucky, in 1798–99, to effect gradual emancipation in that State. But this proposition, he said, had failed, though it was sustained by a large and respectable minority, which was steadily increasing until the Abolitionists commenced their operations. The effect, he said, had been to dissipate all prospects whatever, for the present, of any scheme of gradual or other emancipation.

But, he declared, if he could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain (slavery) from the character of the country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it,—if he could only be instrumental in wiping this foul blot from that revered State that gave him birth, and that not less beloved State which kindly adopted him as her son,—he would not exchange the proud satisfaction he should enjoy for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror.

The speech was an elaborate one, and listened to by crowded galleries.

Shortly after this speech was delivered, Colonel Preston, of South Carolina, happening to be in Philadelphia, the Whigs held an impromptu meeting in Independence Hall, presided over by John Sergeant, which was addressed by the eloquent Senator. Speaking of Mr. Clay, he said he was a very noble man. He himself came into the Senate with strong prejudices against him. He had warmly opposed him long before he knew him. In the Senate he found himself by his side; he watched him with jealous eye, but his prejudices had gradually given way before the power of truth, and, from being a suspicious opponent, he frankly confessed, he had become an admirer of the man. No man ever looked danger in the eye with a more determined countenance, when in the pursuit of truth or the sustainment of right, than Henry Clay.

"On one occasion," Mr. Preston said, "Mr. Clay did me the honor to consult with me in reference to a step he was about to take, and which will, perhaps, occur to your minds without a more direct allusion. After stating what he proposed, it was remarked that such a course might be offensive to the ultras of both parties, in the great excitement which then existed. To this Mr. Clay replied, 'I trust the sentiments and opinions are correct: I HAD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN BE PRESIDENT.'"

Mr. Clay's speech, alluded to by Mr. Preston, had the effect to greatly increase the hostility of the Abolitionists against him, and probably to alienate from him many good people in the free States, who, though acting with the Whigs and not calling themselves Abolitionists, had strong prejudices against slavery. Such was the extent of its unfavorable influence on this class of people that a leading politician of the State of New York addressed a letter to a friend, which was published, expressing the opinion that it had ruined Mr. Clay's prospects for the Presidency, by alienating from him a large mass of Whig voters in that and other free States. The writer and the Whig leaders who affiliated with him—mostly Anti-Masons—were from that time active in their endeavors to defeat his nomination by the Harrisburg Convention.

I sent Mr. Clay a copy of the letter, and in his reply, dated Ashland, 11th of July, 1839, he said,—

* * * * * * * *

"I am obliged to you for the copy of Mr. ——'s letter. I can bear unfavorable information, and should always regret its being withheld from me. I esteem it the office of a friend to communicate it. Mr. ——'s opinion and information do not accord with the opinion and information of others which have been communicated to me; but he may be right. If the result which he apprehends is to be produced by abolition, in consequence of my speech, I cannot change it. That speech expressed my true sentiments, and I must abide by whatever consequences they may lead to.

"With great esteem and regard, I am yours faithfully,

"H. CLAY."

ORGANIZATION OF THE WHIG PARTY IN PENNSYLVANIA.

The only organized opposition party in Pennsylvania, until the summer of 1839, was the ANTI-MASONIC; the Whigs generally voting for their nominees for State offices. But, as the Anti-Masons were generally opposed to Mr. Clay, whom the Whigs decidedly preferred, it was resolved by the leading Whigs of the State that a State organization of the party should be effected. This task was assigned to me.

A Whig convention was called, and met at Chambersburg on the 13th of June, of which the Hon. George Chambers was president, and which adopted a series of excellent resolutions, and an address to the people of the State, the former prepared by the Hon. Joseph R. Ingersoll, the latter by myself.

To this movement the leading Anti-Masons were strongly opposed, though some twenty-five or thirty of them appeared in the convention, claiming to be Whigs.

One of the resolutions reported to the convention by Mr. Joseph R. Ingersoll declared a preference for Mr. Clay as a candidate for President, and, the convention refusing to strike out the name of Henry Clay and insert that of William Henry Harrison, on the motion of Charles B. Penrose the

Anti-Masons withdrew, thus removing all doubt, if any existed, as to the purpose for which they put on a Whig garb to enter the convention.

The convention, while avowing its preference for Mr. Clay for President, declared the intention of supporting the nominee of the Harrisburg National Convention, whether Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, or General Harrison. This we thought fair and just; but the Harrison men who had surreptitiously got into our convention would agree to nothing but the support of their favorite; they would support him, and him only; and this doggedness finally carried the day at Harrisburg, Mr. Penrose being one of the leaders there, and chief engineer.

SECOND SUSPENSION OF SPECIE PAYMENTS.

On the 10th of October, 1839, the banks in Philadelphia again suspended specie payments, and on the next day the banks of Baltimore followed suit, as they did generally, South and West, immediately after.

The financial crisis in the United States, of 1839, was foreseen and foretold by sagacious financiers months before it occurred. They foresaw that a stoppage of specie payments by the banks would be inevitable, though they were making every possible effort to avoid it.

I have already spoken of the great number of banks that were brought into existence immediately after the expiration of the charter of the United States Bank, of the great increase of paper currency, and of the almost universal disposition to embark in trade and speculations, superinduced by the redundancy of bank facilities. Money—or what was considered money at the time—was abundant, and the appearance of prosperity universal, though deceptive. "Such was the avidity with which foreign goods were purchased in our cities, that the manufacturers of England put into immediate operation the necessary machinery to meet our increased demand. The natural consequence followed: the raw material (cotton) became an immediate object of speculation in England, and the cotton-bearing lands in the United States were bought and sold at exorbitant prices. This apparently high state of prosperity,

and the great facility of obtaining money at low rates of interest in England, tempted our States to embark in great schemes of internal improvement, which required large disbursements on these works, an unprecedented demand for labor, and a corresponding increase in its value. The logical result was the withdrawal of a very considerable percentage of labor from agricultural pursuits, occasioning an immediate curtailment in the productions of the soil, and a corresponding advance of provisions of every description."

These causes were amply sufficient of themselves to create a serious financial and commercial disturbance; but now, superadded to these, came an unusual and an extraordinary one. "In ordinary times England received payment for her goods sent to the United States, in our funds, and rarely required, because she rarely needed, specie. But now, 1839, her crops failed, and she was forced to purchase food to prevent famine; not from our country, but from her neighbors, who could furnish it cheaper than we could, for the reason that labor in this country was high, and drawn off, in a measure, from our farms. Now, the countries where England could purchase most reasonably the food she needed were comparatively small consumers of her products, and she must therefore pay in specie. For this purpose the Bank of England alone furnished over thirty-five millions of dollars,—a drain which threatened that institution with suspension.

"The consequence of all this was that money rose to three times its ordinary value; that the staples of this country were unsalable, except at ruinous prices; that the stocks and bonds sent by the States, by the banks, or by individuals, were unconvertible, leaving as the only mode of payment the exportation of specie.

"The great rise in the value of money, and its scarcity in England, compelled merchants and manufacturers to seek for it in this country, and they accomplished their ends by emptying their warehouses into the packet-ships, selling their goods here at a small or large sacrifice, as the case might be, for notes which were discounted at a sacrifice, and the specie then drawn from the banks and shipped to England, leaving this

country flooded with goods, regardless of the real wants of the people, or of the prospect of their being consumed." But cheapness was a great temptation to most people to buy, though we could as well do without, and a few months' credit added greatly to this temptation. The result was that the coin of this country—we did not then produce and export gold as an article of merchandise—was drawn to England to enable her to supply the irresistible demand of her people for food. It was stated that the Pennsylvania Bank of the United States had had eight million seven hundred and twelve thousand dollars of specie drawn from her vaults from the date of the resumption of specie payments, in August, 1838, up to the 10th of October, 1839, and that the demand for specie upon all the banks was increasing, threatening the withdrawal of every dollar if not stopped.

Such was the fiscal and commercial condition of this country when the banks closed their vaults and held fast to the specie they had left; and this step enabled them to extend their line of discounts and thus relieve the community.

But, superadded to the causes which induced the banks, generally, to suspend, there were special circumstances which operated on the United States Bank of Pennsylvania. On a former occasion, when the merchants and banks of New York were suffering under an extraordinary financial pressure, Mr. Biddle, at their urgent request, visited that city, cheered their drooping spirits, infused into them some of his own courage and resolution, and finally brought the United States Bank to their aid, by issuing for their use and benefit about fourteen or fifteen millions of post-notes, for which he took the personal security of the merchants, or, in some instances, perhaps, additional real-estate security.

These post-notes were now maturing, and the bank was draining her vaults in paying them, though the bulk of them were not yet presented. But while she was called upon and liable to be called upon to pay these post-notes, the notes for which she had given them were unpaid and unavailable. In the incipiency of the transaction, Mr. Biddle was lauded and almost worshiped as a savior; in the end, damned to everlast-

ing fame. It was the old story: he lent his money to friends, and by so doing made them enemies. Had Mr. Biddle's advice been followed, the banks would not have resumed in 1838, to stop again, as he foresaw they would be compelled to, in 1839; but would have waited, strengthening themselves meantime, until they could resume permanently.

The fiscal condition of the country, or rather, perhaps, the condition of the currency, will appear from the rates of exchange at New York on other cities, which were as follows:

On Philadelphia	12½ per cent.
" Baltimore	13½ " "
" Baltimore bank-notes	14 to 15 per cent.
" Mobile	12 to 15 " "
" New Orleans	5 to 6 " "
" Cincinnati	8 to 10 " "
" other parts of Ohio	10 to 15 " "
" St. Louis	12 " "
" Natchez	20 to 25 " "
" Rhode Island	8 to 10 " "

MOVEMENTS TO PREVENT MR. CLAY'S NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

As the time was approaching when Presidential candidates must be selected, and as Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, and General Harrison each had their friends, it was deemed advisable that a Whig national convention should be held at Harrisburg, in December, 1839, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency. That Mr. Clay was the choice of a very large majority of the Whigs of the country there could not be a reasonable doubt. But there were many men of influence,—some of whom were leading Whigs, and some who were mere hangers upon the skirts of the party, ready to join it or oppose it, according to circumstances,—chiefly in New York and Pennsylvania, who were, more or less, opposed to his nomination, and who, though too politic to avow their real feelings, and even professing to be great admirers of him, were secretly active during the summer of 1839 in laying plans to insure his defeat at Harrisburg.

That some of the gentlemen who were thus endeavoring to

prevent Mr. Clay's nomination did so under an honest and firm conviction that he could not be elected, and that General Harrison could, I have no doubt; but they acted in concert with others whose motives were of quite a different character. The object to be gained by each was the same; the *animus* towards Mr. Clay, totally different.

Mr. Henry A. Wise has lately put forth a work entitled "Seven Decades of the Union," in which he has stated how the machinations of these opponents of Mr. Clay were carried on, as they were first disclosed to him by the pure, the upright, the universally esteemed Judge Hugh L. White, of Tennessee. Without vouching for the truth of Judge White's statement to Mr. Wise, but only saying that he must have fully believed what he related or he never would have made the statement, I deem it right to repeat its substance.

The purpose of those who were endeavoring to defeat Mr. Clay was to elect in the State of New York, where nine-tenths of the Whigs preferred him to all others, delegates either opposed to him, or who could be operated on after they were elected. General Harrison had no strength in that State; but General Scott was popular, though scarcely thought of as a candidate for President. His name, however, was now used, with no intent to benefit him, but to effect the defeat of Mr. Clay and the nomination of General Harrison.

According to Judge White, an extensive correspondence, denominated by him "the triangular correspondence," was carried on,—letters being written by gentlemen in various parts of the State to others in other parts, the writers professing to be ardent friends of Mr. Clay and to desire his election, but, at the same time, expressing regrets that he had no strength in the writer's county or section of the State, and urging that efforts be made for him by the person written to, who was also one of those pretended friends. Upon the receipt of this letter, and perhaps similar ones from others in other parts of the State in the secret, the recipient did not fail to show them to the true friends of Mr. Clay, at the same time expressing regrets that he could not carry the State. He, the recipient, was for Mr. Clay above all others; but, if he could not get

the vote of the State, why, then he was for nominating General Scott.

Such is the substance or outline of the plan to defeat Mr. Clay, as revealed to Mr. Wise. But Judge White remarked at the time that it would do no good to let Mr. Clay know of it, for he was so confiding in those he trusted that he would not believe the existence of this scheme to defeat him, and would not, therefore, take any steps to counteract it.

The reasons urged by the leaders of the movement to the real friends of Mr. Clay, whom they sought to influence, were that he was a slaveholder and an advocate of slavery, or, at least, opposed to abolition, as appeared by his late speech in the Senate, and it was well known that the anti-slavery feeling prevailed very extensively in New York; and, moreover, he was a Mason, and therefore obnoxious to a large body of the Whigs who were opposed to Masonry. These reasons were not, however, publicly avowed.

General Scott was set up as a kind of half-way house to which the unwary, weak, or wavering might be enticed; and once there, the remainder of the way into the Harrison camp was quite easy. General Scott was used simply as a decoy-duck,—nothing more. But how could they play this game upon Mr. Clay after he had been made aware of it? "Because," says Judge White, in the language reported, "the arrangements of Mr. Clay were already intrusted to parties who were co-operating with his enemies, and of this he could not be made to distrust his professed friends."

It was not in his nature to distrust a friend, or one who professed to be, until his treachery became apparent. Frank, candid, and open-hearted himself, he could not suspect treachery in others except upon demonstrable proof. Habitual suspicion dwells not in a generous breast.

HUGH LAWSON WHITE.

The elections in many of the States this year, 1839, resulted adversely to the Whigs. This was the case in Tennessee, where the Democrats succeeded in electing a majority of the Legislature, which, on assembling in the winter, passed such

resolutions of instruction to the United States Senators from that State, Hugh L. White and Ephraim Foster, as induced them to resign,—the purpose intended by the resolutions.

I have spoken of Judge White in connection with the machinations against Mr. Clay; but he was a man of too much note and character, of too eminent abilities, too long known in public service as a jurist and statesman, too dearly beloved by his brother Senators and all who knew him intimately, to be suffered to flit across our vision without further notice.

He was a gentleman of very marked personal appearance,—tall, slender, pale, and emaciated, his snowy locks hanging loosely upon his neck; his face bespoke the benignity of his heart and the serenity of his mind, giving dignity to his manners and commanding the respect of all who saw him. He was the very impersonation of probity and good will to all mankind. At first sight a stranger would say, "There is an honest man, the noblest work of God himself!"

It was deeply lamented that such a Senator, "the noblest Roman of them all," should be forced to leave that august body where he had so long honored his State and won universal regard. But political parties are inexorable: obedience to their behests, however unreasonable, is their unalterable law, without which no merit, no long public services, no inflexible honesty, no patriotism, however devoted, will suffice.

Always accustomed to obey the expressed wishes of the people of Tennessee, and holding the doctrine of "the right of instruction," when the resolutions of the Legislature reached him requiring the Senators of that State to vote for the Sub-Treasury bill, to which he was opposed, no alternative was left him, consistent with his self-respect and purity of character, but to resign.

But it was not so much the desire to compel Judge White to vote for the Sub-Treasury bill as the purpose to punish him for having refused to support Mr. Van Buren for President, and allowing himself to be a candidate in opposition to General Jackson's favorite, which moved the Legislature to pass the resolutions of instruction. Judge White had been the life-long friend

of the general,—supported him for President, and ably sustained his administration; but he had no confidence in Mr. Van Buren, and would not give him his support: he had, moreover, received the electoral vote of Tennessee, despite Jackson's strenuous efforts to secure it for his own candidate. This was mortifying, and a mortal offense to "the old Hero," who never forgave any one, not even so old and sincere a friend as Judge White, who had crossed his path and thwarted his purpose; and from that time the old friend was treated as an enemy. The instructions were the inspiration of the general himself.

It was not in the power of the Legislature of Tennessee to dishonor a man so universally respected and beloved as Judge White; but it was in their power to dishonor themselves and the State which they misrepresented, and they did it, bringing forth the general cry of "Shame! shame!"

Judge White resigned his seat in the Senate in January, 1840; but before doing so he addressed that body on the Sub-Treasury bill, in a very able speech against it,—the last he ever made in that body,—taking leave of it in a few touching remarks which were deeply felt by those with whom he had been so long and so agreeably associated. Probably no member of that peerless body could have left it followed by a more general and affectionate regret. Before leaving Washington, a large number of Senators, members of the House, and private citizens gave proof of their high esteem for his character and love for the man by giving him a public dinner: honoring themselves in honoring him.

On the 17th of August, 1840, addressing a monster meeting of the people, at Nashville, Tennessee, Mr. Crittenden spoke in the following most feeling and eloquent manner of this venerable and revered man. Speaking of his bill to prevent removals from office, he said,—

"Fellow-citizens, I wish I could stop here. I wish I could say that no statesman but my honorable and esteemed friend Mr. Foster had been sacrificed by means of that bill, and the manner in which it was greatly perverted and misrepresented. Some of your banners floating over me this day tell me, tell us all, of his departed colleague, Hugh Lawson White. It was

my good fortune to know that venerable patriot well, to possess his full confidence. He was a good, honest, upright, and sincere man,—as sternly honest as Cato, as scrupulously just as Aristides! Full well do I remember the most solemn and imposing scene in the Senate-chamber, on the instructing resolutions, when he took his leave forever of that body, of which he had been a bright ornament for many, many years. Hugh Lawson White stood erect, with his gray locks floating over his shoulders, and calmly but sternly performed his duty. All was hushed and still as death; it was a scene which filled the beholder with awe and veneration. When on the point of leaving Washington to return home, I strove to detain him. I sought him for that purpose, and found him, not in his carriage, but on *his horse*. I warned him that the winter was rude and cold, the winds bleak, the snows deep and treacherous. I implored him not to depart at such an inclement season. His reply—so simple, so characteristic—I shall never, never forget: 'Tennessee needs me; I must go.' No human power would have swayed him; he loved and honored his State, and when she spoke, he was ever ready to obey. He did return at her call, and now lies buried beneath the green sod in her eastern mountains. He died a martyr to that bill which the partisans of the administration so loudly and vehemently condemned."

His departure from Washington closed the drama of Judge White's public life. He returned home, and in a few months ended his earthly career; the event being hastened, probably, by the keen sensibility with which he felt the treatment he had received from the beloved State he had so long and so honorably served, and upon which he had reflected so much honor.

His death occurred in May, about five months after he left the Senate; and although it had never been customary for the Senate to take official notice of the death of any one not a member at the time, yet on this occasion the same proceedings were had as if he were still a Senator. His demise was announced by Mr. Benton, who had known him in early life, —even in boyhood,—with very impressive and appropriate remarks.

Mr. Preston, of South Carolina, also spoke of him in eulo-

gistic, affectionate, and reverential terms,—the beauty of his sentiments and language well befitting the beauty of Judge White's character.

WHIG REVERSES AGAIN.

The reverses encountered by the Whigs in the elections in various States in 1839 had a depressing effect upon them, and were not without influence on the nomination by the Harrisburg Convention. The following extracts from a letter addressed to me by Mr. Clay will show the despondency of his feelings at the time:

"ASHLAND, 25th October, 1839.

"MY DEAR SIR,— . . . The elections everywhere this year indicate unprecedented success on the part of the administration. And if in —— and ——, as you seem to apprehend, the same degree of success should be achieved, political prospects will be sufficiently gloomy.

"I have long since made up my mind to do my duty and leave the issue to the people and to Providence. I shall in that way secure at least the approbation of my own conscience.

"I am grieved to witness the divisions among the Whigs. Defeat and disaster do not, with them, seem to produce the usual effect of more concord and harmony. If these divisions unhappily continue, there will not even be hope left to us. And I see no other chance of reconciling them than through the agency of the Harrisburg Convention. God knows with what alacrity I would consent to have my name withheld from the convention, if it would have the effect of increasing our prospects of success.

* * * * * * * *

"It has been a source of great satisfaction to me heretofore, as, in any event, it will be hereafter, to know that I enjoy the confidence of yourself and other estimable friends.

"With great regard,

"I am yours faithfully,

"H. CLAY.

"N. SARGENT, ESQ."

Does this look like overweening ambition to be President?

Yet Mr. Clay was at this time thus charged by the wire-workers of the Harrison men, and the New York cabal. Scarcely were the supporters of the administration more earnest in their hostility to him, or more abusive of his character, than the friends of General Harrison in Pennsylvania and New York, whose warfare was not so much against Mr. Van Buren and his measures as against Mr. Clay. While he counseled conciliation and harmony, and, with his friends, was ready to support General Harrison should he be the nominee, there was no reciprocity of friendliness on their part. It was General Harrison or nobody with them. This was an unfair and unequal game, and proved to be a losing one on the part of Mr. Clay, and disastrous to the Whig party.

"CONSERVATIVES."

I have before spoken of the class of public men calling themselves by the above name, the most prominent of whom were Mr. Rives and Mr. Garland, of Virginia, Mr. Tallmadge and John C. Clark, of New York, Mr. Legaré, of South Carolina, and F. O. J. Smith, of Maine. These were all in Congress; but they had numerous associates and followers in their respective States. They had all been Republicans, or Democrats, and professed to be so now, but were opposed to the Sub-Treasury scheme and other measures of Mr. Van Buren.

A very large conservative meeting was held in October, 1839, in the city of New York, which numbered among those gathered together on the occasion, in the Park, many of the old substantial leaders of the Democratic party. Many speakers ably addressed the multitude, but the great speech of the day, and a truly great speech it was, was delivered impromptu by Hugh S. Legaré, of South Carolina. It was argumentative, philosophic, humorous, impassioned, elevated in sentiment, a model of purity of language, pungency of sarcasm, and force of reasoning. It riveted attention and carried conviction.

Great discontent existed among merchants, importers, bankers, business men of every kind, and laborers. Money was scarce, business stagnant, exchanges enormous, and specie, of which there was but little, was flowing rapidly to Europe to

pay for our excessive importations under the low tariff then existing.

This general depression and discontent were undoubtedly the cause of the great assemblage of the substantial men of New York addressed by Mr. Legaré. He understood and appreciated his audience, and was, in turn, inspired by their close and intelligent attention and well-timed applause. He read their thoughts; he comprehended the cause of their complaints of the government, and he pointed out the remedy,—a change of rulers, a more enlightened government, abandonment of the Sub-Treasury and all other "experiments" upon the currency and the business of the country; the casting aside of all those who cried, "Perish credit, perish commerce!" who declared that "the government would take care of itself, and the people must take care of themselves."

Speaking of the public offices of the government being treated as "spoils" to be shared by the "victors," Mr. Legaré designated it as an "execrable system," and poured forth a torrent of scornful invective upon a practice so corrupting to the recipients of office and degrading to the government itself. To talk of merit, however extraordinary, as a reason for an appointment, was, he said, considered mere raving; to recommend a man for an appointment on account of his fitness for it, however pre-eminent, was to make your simplicity a subject of derision at court.

HUGH S. LEGARÉ.

Mr. Legaré was, at the time I am speaking of, a young man, but had already made his mark in Congress, and before the Supreme Court of the United States, as a man of extraordinary mental power, a very learned lawyer, a ripe and profound scholar, and a brilliant orator. He was short in stature, thick and firm set, had a large mouth, penetrating eyes overhung by heavy eyebrows, and a colossal head. His memory was wonderful. In arguing a cause before the Supreme Court, he could refer from memory to the volume and page where any case a judge might happen to inquire about was to be found, and state the principle therein decided, even though he could not have anticipated that the case would be referred to in the

course of his argument,—thus showing his thorough reading and extraordinary memory.

Mr. Legaré was the descendant of a Huguenot, so many of whom came to South Carolina after their expulsion from France in consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685. With his own ancestor came the Hugers (pronounced Hujees), the Desaussures, the Gaillards, the Pettigrus, the Memmingers, and hundreds of other families who have been distinguished for talent, enterprise, refinement, learning, wealth, and lofty bearing.

Colonel Preston, of South Carolina, used to relate a very amusing anecdote of Mr. Legaré. They traveled in Europe together when young men. Being in London, they were called upon one evening by a gentleman who was a professor of Greek in the University of Oxford. For some time the conversation was almost exclusively between the professor and Mr. Preston. Mr. Legaré had made a remark or two, by way of taking part in the conversation, but the professor did not notice or respond to his remarks, seeming to consider him as merely the traveling companion of Mr. Preston and not worth his notice. This piqued Mr. Legaré, who determined to take his revenge. Assuming an air of ignorance, and professing a desire to obtain some information in regard to some Greek verbs or the proper construction of some Greek sentence, he plied the professor with questions which would have put the most profound Greek scholar to his trumps to answer, and thus kept him under the harrow for a full hour, till, as Mr. Preston remarked, the perspiration fairly poured from him, and he was glad to escape by taking his leave. Mr. Legaré was, of course, a very learned Greek scholar, as the professor soon found. As the latter passed out of hearing, "There," said Mr. Legaré, "I think he will not take me for a noodle next time." Mr. Preston used to laugh most heartily, in relating this anecdote, at the predicament and tribulation of the Greek professor while undergoing this chastisement at the hands of Mr. Legaré.

Mr. Legaré should have been simply a jurist,—not a politician. Could he have been placed upon the bench of the Supreme Court, he would have adorned the seat, and proved

one of the ablest judges that ever graced that high position. Law was his delight. For politics—party politics—he had little taste; for party management, discipline, and trickery, utter disgust.

NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT BY THE HARRISBURG CONVENTION.

The Whig National Convention met at Harrisburg on the 4th of December, 1839, and organized by electing Governor James Barbour, of Virginia, as president, and sundry vice-presidents and secretaries.

Efforts were made by the friends of Mr. Clay to have an open vote taken, *per capita;* but this was successfully resisted, a friend of Mr. Webster, Mr. Sprague, submitting a resolution which, on being amended upon the motion of Mr. Penrose, of Pennsylvania, was adopted, which effectually changed the body from a fair, open, honest convention into a closed-door conclave.

Mr. Penrose, I must remind the reader, was the leader of the Harrison—anti-Masonic, anti-Clay—men who came into the Chambersburg *Whig* Convention, disguised as Whigs, direct from an anti-Masonic convention, and seceded from the former when the convention refused to strike out the name of Clay as their choice for President and insert that of Harrison. *Now* he is found in the lead in a national *Whig* convention, and acting with him, as delegates, were five or six other Chambersburg seceders.

The cabalistic resolution was as follows:

"That the delegates from each State be requested to assemble as a delegation, and appoint a committee, not exceeding three in number, to receive the views and opinions of such delegation, and communicate the same to the assembled committees of all the delegations, to be by them respectively reported to their principals; and that thereupon the delegates from each State be requested to assemble as a delegation and ballot for candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President, and, having done so, to commit the ballot designating the votes of each candidate, and by whom given, to its committee; and

thereupon all the committees shall assemble and compare the several ballots, and report the result of the same to their several delegations, together with such facts as may bear upon the nomination; and said delegation shall forthwith re-assemble and ballot again for candidates for the above offices, and again commit the result to the above committees, and if it shall appear that a majority of the ballots are for any one man for candidate for President, said committee shall report the result to the convention for its consideration; but if there shall be no such majority, then the delegations shall repeat the balloting until such a majority shall be obtained, and then report the same to the convention for its consideration. That the vote of the majority of each delegation shall be reported as the vote of that State; and each State represented here shall vote its full electoral vote by such delegation in the committee."

As an old friend of Mr. Clay, I fear I am unable, even after the lapse of thirty-four years, to speak of this ingenious *contrivance*—unknown till then to the most skillful political engineers, and never resorted to since—with becoming moderation, and I therefore borrow the language of Colonel Benton, whose opinion of this *device* was not likely to be influenced by any partiality towards Mr. Clay:

"The leading statesmen of the Whig party were again passed by to make room for a candidate more sure of being elected. The success of General Jackson had turned the attention of those who managed the Presidential nominations to military men, and 'an odor of gunpowder' was considered a sufficient attraction to rally the masses, without the civil qualifications or the actual military fame which General Jackson possessed. . . . Mr. Clay, the prominent man, and the undisputed head of the party, was not deemed available; and it was determined to set him aside. How to do it was the question. He was a man of too much power and spirit to be rudely thrust aside. Gentle and respectful means were necessary to get him out of the way; and for that purpose he was concertedly importuned to withdraw from the canvas. He would not do so, but wrote a letter submitting himself to the will of the convention. When he did so he certainly expected an open decision,—a vote in

open convention,—every delegate acting responsibly and according to the will of his constituents. Not so the fact. He submitted himself to the convention; the convention delivered him to a committee; the committee disposed of him in a back chamber. It devised a process for getting at a result which is a curiosity in the chapter of ingenious inventions,—which is a study for the complication of its machinery,—a model contrivance of the few to govern the many,—a secure way to produce an intended result without showing the design, and without leaving a trace behind to show what was done; and of which none but itself can be its own delineator."

After copying the sleight-of-hand contrivance to effect a result the tricksters dared not openly avow, Colonel Benton continues:

"Here is a process through multiplied filtrations by which the popular sentiment is to be deduced from the masses, collected in little streams, then united in one swelling current and poured into the hall of the convention,—no one seeing the source or course of any one of the streams. Algebra and alchemy must have been laid under contribution to work out a quotient from such a combination of signs and symbols. But it was done. Those who set the sum could work it; and the quotient was political death to Mr. Clay."

The first ballot in the committee of States, the nearest expression of the true feeling of the convention obtained at any time, though this was far from being a true one, was as follows:

Clay.—Rhode Island, 4; Connecticut, 8; Delaware, 3; Maryland, 10; Virginia, 23; North Carolina, 15; Kentucky, 14; Illinois, 5; Alabama, 7; Louisiana, 5; Mississippi, 4; Missouri, 4. Total, 102.

Harrison.—Maine, 10; New Hampshire, 7; Massachusetts, 14; Pennsylvania, 30; Ohio, 21; Indiana, 9. Total, 91.

Scott.—Vermont, 7; New York, 42; New Jersey, 8. Total, 57.

Not a vote cast by New York for Mr. Clay, but the whole forty-two for General Scott, when it was notorious that nine-tenths of the Whigs of that State were ardently for Mr. Clay! By what legerdemain was this effected?

The result of "the triangular correspondence," which Judge White informed Mr. Wise was being carried on in New York

with the intention of defeating Mr. Clay, is shown in this ballot; the whole vote of the State of New York being cast for General Scott, with no purpose whatever of nominating him, but with the view to turn the whole over to Harrison when, by proper plots and intrigue, it could be done. Vermont and New Jersey were also enticed into the Scott half-way house, to be presently marched over to the Harrison camp!

The influence of Mr. Webster, or of his wire-working friends, was perceptible in the votes of Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire being cast for General Harrison; and this, when in 1836, both he and General Harrison being candidates, he did not disguise a feeling towards the latter precisely similar to that which he afterwards uttered so forcibly in regard to the nomination of General Taylor, but much more emphatic and derogatory.

It was a well-known fact that the Whigs of Pennsylvania, almost to a man, preferred Mr. Clay to General Harrison, while the Anti-Masons, who appeared in a Whig mask and thus got into the convention, were extremely hostile to him. They were adroit enough to get a majority of the Pennsylvania delegation of the wolf-in-sheep's-clothing stripe, and thus cast the vote of the State for Harrison; the true Whigs being overslaughed and silenced. But the work was done; double dealing and treachery accomplished the result the intriguers had been for months laying plans to effect.

For three or four days, whilst the *conclave* was at its work "in a back chamber," and rumor gave out hints from time to time of the seething of the political cauldron within, the most intense excitement prevailed outside; and at one time, shortly before the final result was announced, many members had resolved to abandon the convention and return home.

The announcement of the result, the nomination of General Harrison, did not allay the feeling of Mr. Clay's friends. They were disappointed, grieved even to tears; while the friends of Harrison exulted over their triumph. Such, however, was the manifestation of disappointment and chagrin of the Clay men, that those who had carried the day became alarmed lest theirs should prove a barren victory for the want of the support of

those over whom they had triumphed. And now, after having contumaciously cast the great leader of the party aside, they began lauding him with feigned sincerity and artful guile, *ad nauseam.* As a mark of their sincerity, they were ready to support, as the candidate for Vice-President, the most ardent, unyielding friend of Mr. Clay,—any one whom his friends would name.

Mr. Clay's magnanimous letter to the Kentucky delegation was read in the convention, requesting them not to let his name stand in the way of harmony, but to support cheerfully whoever might be found to be the choice of the convention. Actuated by this example and inculcation, his friends, though deeply grieved, promptly acquiesced in the decision of the convention, and took, without scorning it, the very *generous* offer of their victors, of the Vice-Presidency. Mr. Benjamin Watkins Leigh, of Virginia, a devoted friend of Mr. Clay, a man of splendid abilities, universally beloved and admired, whose principles were in all respects those of the Whig party, was the choice of Mr. Clay's friends for this office, but he positively declined it. He would not profit by his friend's defeat; he would not be placed on a ticket with his friend's successful rival. He was besought, but stood firm. He would not become the associate of one whose nomination he had opposed. Such a high-toned sense of honor did not fail to command the admiration of the whole convention. Mr. Tallmadge, of New York, and Mr. Southard, of New Jersey, were both tendered the Vice-Presidency, but declined it, under the circumstances. Finally, Mr. Tyler was named by some one, and, as he had *shed tears* at Mr. Clay's defeat, had been Governor of Virginia, and a Senator in Congress, the convention soon settled down on him, and he was nominated. And thus were given to the Whig party as its candidates

"Tippecanoe,
And Tyler too."

Mr. Tyler had not long acted with the Whig party, though he seemed to be in entire harmony with it. But, ignorant as were nine-tenths of the members of the convention of his true

character and political antecedents, there was neither time nor disposition to inquire into them. He was there as a member of a Whig convention; had shown himself a devoted friend of Mr. Clay, or a grand hypocrite, by the grief he had manifested at his defeat. The inference was that he was a Whig in principle as well as profession. No one thought to ask if he held to the Virginia resolutions of '98, or had crotchets or scruples peculiar to himself, which would be likely to make trouble in the party. Whig principles were as well known as the Ten Commandments or the Apostles' Creed; and he who openly avowed himself a member of that party was supposed to hold to its cardinal doctrines. The assertion that he was selected and nominated because he was a State-rights, anti-bank man had no foundation whatever. His acceptance of the nomination bound him in all honor to sustain the known principles of the party whose candidate he was willing to be. If he did not hold to those principles, he had no business in the convention; and if he did not mean to carry them out honestly in practice, his acceptance was both a fraud and a treachery.

On the adjournment of the convention, many of the delegates came to Washington, and a grand supper was gotten up for them at Brown's, now the Metropolitan Hotel, to which Mr. Clay was, of course, invited. The occasion was a very pleasant one: good feeling prevailed, and if any one present felt regrets at the doings of the convention, they were not manifested.

Mr. George Evans, of Maine, made a speech, welcoming the delegates of the convention, and applauding their patriotic labors; to which Mr. Boardman, of Connecticut, on behalf of himself and the other delegates present, replied. Mr. Tyler, the nominee for Vice-President, was also a guest, and replied briefly to a toast, but declared most positively that his nomination was a surprise to him, not having had the remotest expectation of any such result.

But Mr. Clay's was the most important speech of the evening, and to draw it forth was probably the very purpose of the entertainment.

With his usual magnanimity and abnegation of self, he declared his acquiescence in the nomination of General Harrison,

and exhorted his friends that, if disappointed at the result, they should forget their disappointment and labor with all their zeal to secure the election of the nominees,—to overturn this corrupt administration and establish a purer one.

His speech had a soothing effect upon his disappointed friends, who now resolved to follow his advice and example and heartily support the nominees, though in doing so they made a great sacrifice of feeling. They could not but ask themselves whether it was wise to set aside the great leader and almost the idol of the Whig party to gratify the malevolence of Anti-Masons and others, who now accepted the *name* of Whigs, but were really strangers and aliens in the party. Was it right, was it just, that this leader should be sacrificed because he preferred the triumph of principles, and of his party, to his own? that honors which of right belonged to him should be bestowed on one who had never earned them, and whose chief merit was that, not having taken any part in the great political conflict that had been going on for long years, he had not done or said anything which made him obnoxious to any portion of the opposition?

Looking back to those times and events, and judging of them by the light which subsequent years have thrown upon them, the doings of the Harrisburg Convention must be pronounced most extraordinary, unwise, and unfortunate for the Whig party; in fact, a gross BLUNDER.

Mr. Lincoln used to say it was no time to swap horses while you were crossing a deep, rapid stream with a rocky bottom. Just as unwise would it be to set aside a successful general, who had created, disciplined, and led an army through severe campaigns, won its confidence and devoted attachment, on the eve of a decisive battle, to be replaced by one unknown to the army, and who had had no part or lot in its toils and trials.

But something like this had been done at Harrisburg. Where had been General Harrison during the preceding twelve years, the period of bitter warfare between the Jackson party, headed by the obstinate, sagacious, indomitable old Hero, and the opposition, led during the whole period by the eloquent, the ever-vigilant, the faithful "Harry of the West"? Had

Harrison's voice ever been heard during all this dark and trying period, when amidst the thickest gloom and smoke all looked up to Mr. Clay, sure that he was at his post doing the duty of a patriot, and, if perchance he could not be seen amid the smoke and din, watching for his nodding plume?

I call not in question General Harrison's patriotism; but he was no political leader,—never had been, and never could be, not having the necessary elements for such a position. Besides, he had been long out of public, I cannot say political, life, for he never was in it; was personally unacquainted with most of the leading public men, and men of influence, of the Whig party, to whom he was also personally unknown; and age had already impaired the energies he possessed in his meridian, during the War of 1812,—twenty-seven years before.

Mr. Clay was, for a time, to stand aside; his clarion voice, so well known to the Whig host, was no longer to be heeded as that of their great *leader*. He might continue to serve the country, and even the party, as a great statesman, but another was now the nominal leader. His was not a light, however, which could be hid under a bushel, as events proved.

THE GREAT NEW JERSEY CONTEST IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.

On the assembling of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-sixth Congress, on Monday, December 2, 1839, there commenced a very prolonged, embittered, exciting, and extraordinary contest for the seats of claimants.

At twelve o'clock the Clerk of the House, Mr. Hugh A. Garland, began calling the names of members by States, beginning with Maine, and proceeded until he came to the State of New Jersey. The members from this State having the certificate of the governor, under the great seal of the State, given according to the law of that State, were the following: Joseph B. Randolph, John B. Aycrigg, John B. Maxwell, William Halsted, Charles C. Stratton, and Thomas Jones Yorke.

But though each of the above-named six gentlemen held the commission of the governor, under the great seal of the State, as provided by law, yet the seats of five of them, all but Ran-

dolph, were claimed by Philemon Dickerson, Peter D. Vroom, Daniel B. Ryall, William R. Cooper, and John Kille. The gentlemen holding the commission of the governor were Whigs; the others Democrats. The House was so near a tie, politically, that the admission of the first-named gentlemen would give the Whigs the majority; while the admission of the contestants, on the other hand, would give the Democrats the preponderance. It is necessary to know this in order to account for the extraordinary conduct of the Clerk, and the fierce conflict which ensued.

The rule or practice of the House, from the beginning of the government, had been to accept the usual certificate of election presented by members as *prima facie* evidence of their right to a seat, and if that right were contested, the case, *after the organization* of the House by the election of Speaker, Clerk, etc., was referred to the committee on elections for investigation. This was, and now is, the invariable practice.

When the Clerk came to New Jersey, he called the first name, Joseph B. Randolph, then stopped, and proposed to postpone the calling of the other names, saying that a different return as to the five members had been sent to him by the Secretary of State of New Jersey. This State officer had certified to the election of the five Democrats I have named. He was requested to go on and read the names of the other gentlemen commissioned by the governor, but refused; and here commenced a scene of disorder, noise, confusion, anarchy, and excitement which lasted more than two weeks. The Clerk had no power to control the House, and if he had, he was the cause of all this Bedlam-like hubbub, and he finally refused to put any proposition offered by any member to the House for a vote.

It would be useless to attempt to give even a faint idea of the doings for three or four days. Suffice to say, the assembly, for it was not yet a House, found itself at a stand-still, able to do nothing, when, on the fourth day, the venerable John Quincy Adams, the oldest, but not the oldest continuous, member of the House, rose and addressed those present in language that at once allayed the raging storm. He proceeded to state what had occurred, and that the Clerk now refused to put any ques-

tion to the House, and had, furthermore, positively refused to proceed in the call of the House according to established usage. "Fellow-citizens and members," said Mr. Adams, "in what predicament are we thus placed! We are fixed here by the arbitrary assumption of power by the Clerk as firmly and immovably as the columns around this hall. I have waited four days with a fixed determination not to say one word, and I should have persisted in that determination if I had not seen that under these two decisions of the Clerk it would be impossible; nay, the House might meet and stay here until doomsday and not be able to organize. Now, it seems to me a very extraordinary state of things. Here is a body of men assembled to represent the people, and a more full and complete representation of the people of the United States never did assemble within these walls. Here we are, under the injunction of solemn duties. I appeal to a majority of the House to act."

Mr. Rhett now rose, and said he had a resolution to offer. He desired first to put a question to the Clerk.

Mr. Rhett.—"Does the Clerk determine he will not put a question?"

The Clerk rising to reply, loud cries were raised in all parts of the hall, "Answer,—yes or no."

The Clerk giving an evasive answer, Mr. Rhett offered a resolution that Lewis Williams, of North Carolina, the oldest continuous member of the body, be appointed chairman until the House shall be organized.

Much confusion still prevailed.

The Clerk said he was willing to put that question.

Wm. Cost Johnson.—"I object to your putting any question."

Great uproar; many members attempting to speak at the same time.

Mr. Williams declining to act as chairman, Mr. Rhett substituted the name of John Quincy Adams, and then put the question himself, which was carried by a large majority.

But, though one step had been made towards organizing the House, a complete organization seemed to be as far off as ever. The same uproar and confusion prevailed; many were on their feet, endeavoring, by bawling, to make themselves heard, but

no one listened. The chairman was not the man for the place. Points of order were continually made, and, as he was not only slow in deciding them, but showed that he was no parliamentarian, this boisterous, tumultuous, disgraceful state of things continued for ten days. Finally the House passed a resolution that it would proceed to call the names of gentlemen whose rights to seats were not disputed or contested. The next step was to refer the subject to a committee of nine, appointed by ballot, which was carried,—123 to 84.

This disposed of the question of contested seats, but in an arbitrary manner, and contrary to the uniform usage of the House.

And now came on the election of a Speaker. Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, was the candidate of the Whigs, and George W. Jones, of Virginia, of the Van Buren men. But it was soon found that neither of these could get the whole strength of his party, and Dixon H. Lewis, of Alabama, a partisan of Mr. Calhoun, was put in the place of Jones; but, failing also to get all the Democratic votes, he too was withdrawn. Colonel Benton informs us, with some gusto, that *he* defeated him because he did not mean that Mr. Calhoun, who had just come back into the party, should have the Speakership. Finally, the Whigs and Conservatives united on R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, and elected him.

The five Democrats, Dickerson, Vroom, Ryall, Cooper, and Kille, were admitted to the seats they claimed, to the exclusion of those who bore the legal certificates of election.

But the party paid dearly for this act, for the hue and cry raised against them for "trampling the great seal of the State under foot," and treating her with scorn, was overwhelming.

ANOTHER KEEN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN MR. CLAY AND MR. CALHOUN.

On the 3d of January, 1840, Mr. Calhoun introduced a bill into the Senate to cede the public lands to the States in which they are respectively situated. There was nothing in this which seemed to call for any special notice, and it would have passed unregarded, probably, but that Madam Rumor had taken great

pains to bruit the fact that Mr. Calhoun, after having voluntarily exiled himself from the White House for many years, had lately paid a visit to Mr. Van Buren and had been very cordially received. Indeed, Madam insisted upon it that there had been a great jollification on the occasion; that Mr. Blair, who had said so many pleasant things about "John *Catiline* Calhoun" and his propensity to prefer falsehood to truth, was present, as also the other distinguished gentlemen formerly supposed to constitute the culinary cabinet of General Jackson.

An event so unusual could not but be heard of by Mr. Clay, who could not refrain from alluding to it on the first proper occasion, out of mere mischievous love to poke his quondam friend under the rib. Mr. Clay now rose and demurely intimated a wish to learn whether the administration was in favor of or against this measure,—an inquiry he should not have thought of making had the former personal relations between the Senator and the head of the administration continued to exist; but rumors, of which the city and press were full, gave out that there had been quite recently a great change. Whether the bringing forward of this measure was superinduced by those new relations was what he was desirous to know, and he supposed the Senator from South Carolina or some other could communicate the information.

Mr. Calhoun appealed to the Senate whether it was decorous or proper for the Senator thus to refer to personal relations. Whether he should or should not hold personal friendly relations with the President, or with any one else, concerned himself alone, in regard to which he should certainly not consult the Senator. It was none of his concern, and he had no right to question him in relation to it. "The Senator," Mr. Calhoun said, "assumes that a change in my personal relations involves a change of political principles. But what may have been true in his own memorable case" (alluding to Mr. Clay's joining Mr. Adams and voting for him for President) "is not true in mine: I trust that I am governed by higher motives in my political action than personal considerations."

The taunt thus thrown by Mr. Calhoun was retorted by Mr. Clay, and reproaches were for some time thrown back and forth

with great asperity and sharpness of language. Something had been said by Mr. Clay of pledges; to which Mr. Calhoun replied that if there were pledges in his, Mr. Clay's, case, there were none in his own. He had resumed his long-suspended personal intercourse with the President without the slightest pledge, understanding, or compromise on either side; and it gave him pleasure to say that he had approved of all the leading measures of the President since he assumed the duties of Executive, simply because they accorded with the principles and policy on which he had long acted. The change of their personal relations, therefore, simply followed that of their political.

Now, as Mr. Calhoun had for seven years past most earnestly, not to say violently, condemned the measures of General Jackson, and as Mr. Van Buren professed to "follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor," and was generally believed to be carrying out his measures to the best of his ability, how, and in what respect, could Mr. Calhoun perceive such a change in his principal measures as to bring them into accord with "the principles and policy on which he had long acted and openly avowed"? If, as I have surmised in another place, speaking of Mr. Calhoun's sudden change, he saw a way opening for him to the Presidency as the successor of Mr. Van Buren provided he should return to the Democratic fold, there was no occasion for pledges or understandings between him and Mr. Van Buren. It was not the latter with whom he was dealing or whose favor he sought, but that of the Democratic party.

Mr. Clay replied to Mr. Calhoun, congratulating himself and the Senate that the Senator from South Carolina had at last defined his political position. As he had avowed that all the leading measures of the administration met his approbation and should receive his support, it turned out that the rumor to which he, Mr. Clay, had alluded was true, and the Senator from South Carolina was now to be regarded as identified with the administration. Mr. Clay then referred and replied to Mr. Calhoun's allusion to his support of Mr. Adams, and defended his course on that memorable occasion. He furthermore said that if there was any truth in history, the choice which he then

made was precisely the choice which the Senator from South Carolina had urged upon his friends. The Senator himself had declared his preference of Mr. Adams over General Jackson. He defied the Senator to make what he could out of that portion of his (Mr. Clay's) career.

The Senator had alluded to his (Mr. Clay's) being the advocate of compromise. He was, and no man ought to be more grateful for it than the Senator from South Carolina. But for that compromise he was not at all confident that he would have now had the honor to meet the Senator from South Carolina in the national Capitol.

The last remark of Mr. Clay reminded Mr. Calhoun of the fact that at one time it was General Jackson's purpose to arrest him for treason.

This provoked a further reply from Mr. Calhoun. He declared, with great emphasis, that he felt no gratitude to Mr. Clay for what he did on the occasion alluded to,—none whatever. The measure was necessary to save the Senator politically. Events had placed him (Mr. Clay) flat on his back, and he had no way to recover himself but by the Compromise. "I had the mastery over him," said Mr. Calhoun.

Mr. Clay.—"The Senator has said that I was flat on my back and he was my master. Sir," he exclaimed, with a look of scorn, "he my master! I would not have him for my slave. *He* my master! and I compelled by him! And, as if it were impossible to go far enough in one paragraph, he refers to certain letters of his own to prove that I was not only flat on my back, but that another Senator [Mr. Webster] and the President had robbed me of my strength!

"Why, sir," said Mr. Clay, "I gloried in my strength. Flat on my back as the Senator says I was, he was indebted to me for that measure which relieved him of the difficulties [Jackson's threats to arrest and hang him] by which he was surrounded. Flat as I was, I was able to carry that Compromise through the Senate in opposition to the gentleman [Mr. Webster] who the Senator from South Carolina said had supplanted me, and against his opposition. There was," Mr. Clay said, "a sort of necessity, not of a personal character, operating on me to in-

troduce that measure. Considerations involving the interests, the peace and harmony of the whole country, as well as of the State of South Carolina, influenced me in my course. I saw the condition of the Senator from South Carolina and his friends. I saw the condition to which he had reduced the gallant little State of South Carolina by his unwise and dangerous measures. I saw, too, that we were on the eve of a civil war; and I wished to save the effusion of blood,—the blood of our own fellow-citizens. That was one reason why I introduced the Compromise bill. Another was to save the protective system, which was in danger of being swept away entirely, probably at the next session of Congress, by the tremendous power of the individual who then filled the Executive chair. I felt that the greatest service I could render it would be to obtain for it a 'lease for a term of years.'"

To Mr. Clay's reference to the fact that Mr. Calhoun preferred Mr. Adams for President to General Jackson, Mr. Calhoun made no reply. The fact could not be denied.

Mr. Clay alluded in this debate to Mr. Webster's strong opposition to his Compromise, and Mr. Calhoun to the same opposition, and also to the fact, well known, that Mr. Webster was sustaining General Jackson in his hostility to nullification. There was good reason for Mr. Webster's support of General Jackson's proclamation, since it embodied the doctrines contained in his speech in reply to Mr. Hayne in their utmost latitude and fullness,—the doctrines of those who advocated *national* powers and rights in contradistinction to those who were known as the advocates of "State rights."

Colonel Benton states that the course taken by Mr. Webster on nullification, and his eloquent and able support of the proclamation, touched Jackson, who "threw out the right hand of fellowship to him, treated him with marked distinction, commended him with public praise, and placed him on the roll of patriots. The public mind," he says, "took the belief that they were to act together in future, and that a cabinet appointment or a high mission would be the reward of his patriotic services." Colonel Benton throws out the idea that this was a crisis in Mr. Webster's political life; that he and Jackson could have

cordially united and acted together, both then being in opposition to Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, but that Mr. Webster lacked the *will*, not the intellect, to pursue the course so clearly open to him. "The consequence was that he was soon seen co-operating with them [Clay and Calhoun], Mr. Clay in the lead, in the great measure condemning General Jackson." Colonel Benton says that in a short space of time both Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Webster were seen following the lead of Mr. Clay in his great attack upon the President, in 1834–35. The great abilities of both Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Webster are historic; and if they followed Mr. Clay's lead, it only proves that he was endowed in a far higher degree than they with those peculiar abilities—temper, tact, eloquence, judgment, and *will*—which are necessary to constitute a great leader in the field or in the forum. It is not education, it is not learning, nor great abilities, which enable a man to lead others; he may be eminent for all these, and yet not able to lead any one, because unable to inspire any one with confidence in his capacity or capability of leading, and wanting the tact and personal influence to control others. So it was especially with Mr. Webster: he lacked tact, confidence in himself, and that audacity which enables one to seize the helm and take command of the ship without even saying to the crew, "By your leave," the stubbornness to hold it against all rivals, and the *will* to direct its course according to his own judgment.

Colonel Benton intimates that Mr. Webster missed his *opportunity* by not joining General Jackson, who, he says, "threw out the right hand of fellowship." But how could Mr. Webster unite with one with whom he agreed upon only one subject? They stood in opposition to each other on the bank and tariff questions, on the currency question generally, and on the policy of removals and appointments. General Jackson was a man of strong will; Mr. Webster was not; and yet to give way to the President on these great questions, and go with him, would be to abandon, and be abandoned by, Massachusetts, and even the whole of New England, and all his numerous friends in New York. What could he gain by such a course? What could he be? No longer the great "godlike" Daniel

Webster, the admired of the world, the pride of New England! The course he pursued was not only a choice, but a necessity: he could not be false to his friends, false to his country, false to himself: in short, he could not be other than DANIEL WEBSTER!

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1840.

The Presidential campaign of 1840 was, on many accounts, the most memorable that has ever taken place. It commenced immediately after the nomination of Harrison and Tyler, and was carried on with great and continually increasing spirit and activity to the end.

Mr. Van Buren was renominated by the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, largely made up, as I have shown, of Federal officers; but no nomination was made for Vice-President.

Soon after the nomination of General Harrison, the Washington correspondent of the "Baltimore Republican," a Van Buren paper, said, sneeringly, in one of his letters, in speaking of him, "Give him a barrel of hard cider and settle a pension of two thousand dollars a year on him, and he will sit the remainder of his days contented in a log cabin." The Van Buren papers throughout the country, following the lead of the administration organ at the seat of government, and the Congressional orators of the dominant party, opened upon General Harrison a tremendous fire of denunciation, contumely, scurrilous epithets, and every species of annoyance,—charging him with cowardice, representing him as superannuated, imbecile, and an old granny, ridiculing even his military services, and claiming all his victories as won by Colonel Johnson and other officers subordinate to him.

Among those who undertook to criticise and depreciate General Harrison's military services was Mr., or General, Crary, a member of Congress from Michigan. In a speech made by him in the House, General Crary proved to his own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of all having similar feelings, that the hero of the Thames and of Tippecanoe was no Cæsar, Alexander, or Napoleon; in short, that he was really no hero at all, and knew nothing about military science.

Mr. Corwin was then a member of the House, and, being from Ohio, the duty of replying to Mr. Crary fell upon him. And such a reply! such a speech! such a flaying! such irresistible ridicule! Such a description of a militia colonel, or general, and a country muster,—such a graphic view of the men constituting the regiment or brigade,—their dress, arms, demeanor, and marching,—Shakspeare never attempted; and his description of Falstaff's men, of whom the pot-bellied lover of sack was ashamed, was tame to this portraiture of General Crary and his "riffraffs."

The House and galleries were boisterous with laughter. Poor Crary! Corwin had killed him, politically; his ridicule annihilated him. The places that knew him in Washington and the Capitol knew him no more forever. He returned home, and found himself, wherever he went, an object of curiosity and laughter. He not only woke up *one* morning and found himself famous, but he found himself so every day, and wherever he went.

Some ten years ago—twenty years or more after this incident occurred—a gentleman who knew Mr. Corwin personally happened to fall in company with Mr. Crary, and in the course of the conversation Corwin's name was mentioned, when Mr. Crary said, without any apparent ill feeling, "I have good reason to remember him, for he killed me dead politically." The gentleman to whom this was said was in Washington soon after, and repeated to Governor Corwin what Mr. Crary said, which seemed to give the governor pain and remorse: he expressed his sincere regret that his punishment had been so severe: he had no intention, he said, to do him harm, and was sorry to hear that he had done so.

THE GREAT BALTIMORE CONVENTION.

Before the Harrisburg Convention adjourned, a resolution was adopted recommending the holding of a young men's ratification convention at Baltimore on the first Monday of May. This convention was now held; and such a gathering was never before witnessed in this country. To estimate its numbers was impossible. There were State delegations, county delegations,

city delegations, village delegations, each consisting of from twenty, to three, four, or five hundred; each under proper officers, with their music and various insignia, flags, banners, mottoes, devices, emblems, cabins, 'coons, and cocks. The city was alive, yet everywhere "the latch-string hung out," and everybody was welcome. Here came nearly all the prominent Whigs of the country, and, one would almost think, the whole Whig party.

The multitude were formed in line by States, and marched from the city to the field, two or three miles out, near Canton, selected for holding the convention; and here various stands had been erected from which to address the crowds, and upon these were to be seen Clay, Webster, Crittenden, Choate, Preston, Clayton, Ewing, Evans, Wise, and fifty other distinguished orators. Rolling along in the procession, into the great field and around it, was a huge ball, made of canvas, ten or twelve feet in diameter, which had rolled all the way from Ohio, intended to symbolize the great revolutionary ball rolling on with irresistible force over the land.

Mr. John V. L. McMahon, an eminent lawyer of Baltimore, presided, assisted by numerous vice-presidents, and the speaking went on from the different stands during the whole day. At night Monument Square was filled by a dense mass, and the speaking was continued there till a late hour, Mr. Reverdy Johnson closing it in a most brilliant and eloquent speech. The masses reluctantly retired, and began to disperse to their various homes by the numerous railroad trains.

This was the first time the people of the United States had met in a mass convention, and the effect was to light the flame of enthusiasm in the breast of every one present, and thus with a coal from off the altar each returned home, to light the fires in the prairies, on the mountains, in the valleys, in cities, towns, and neighborhoods, till the whole country was astir with political excitement.

HOW THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1840 WAS CARRIED ON.

If one could imagine a whole nation declaring a holiday or season of rollicking for a period of six or eight months, and

giving themselves up during the whole time to the wildest freaks of fun and frolic, caring nothing for business, singing, dancing, and carousing night and day, he might have some faint notion of the extraordinary scenes of 1840.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, otherwise to form even a faint idea of the universal excitement, enthusiasm, activity, turmoil, and restlessness which pervaded the country during the spring, summer, and fall of that memorable year. Log cabins large enough to hold crowds of people were built in many places. Small ones, decorated with 'coon-skins, were mounted on wheels and used in processions. The use of the 'coon-skins soon led to the adoption of the 'coon (raccoon) itself as an emblem and adjunct of the log cabin, and its "counterfeit presentment" was hoisted in all the Whig papers.

Meetings were everywhere, and every day, held in neighborhoods, school-houses, villages, towns, counties, cities, States, varying in number from ten to one hundred thousand; and wherever there was a gathering there were also speaking and singing. Ladies attended these meetings, or conventions, in great numbers, and joined in the singing. Farmers, with big teams and wagons, would leave their fields and travel ten, twenty, or thirty miles, accompanied by their families and neighbors, to attend a convention or a barbecue and listen to distinguished orators. Crowds on the road, multitudes in big wagons drawn by four, six, or eight horses, made the welkin ring with their log-cabin songs. Nobody slept, nobody worked, nobody rested; at least so it seemed, for all were on the *qui vive* and in motion. The entire population seemed to be absorbed in the great duty of electing General Harrison and thus changing the government. Clay, Webster, Crittenden, Clayton, Choate, Everett, Preston, Corwin, Wise, Prentiss, Hoffman, Reverdy Johnson, Thompson, of Indiana, Thayer, of New York, Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts, and five thousand or more other speakers, were "on the stump" from day to day, from one end of the country to the other, their services everywhere and all the time in demand. All kinds of mottoes and devices were invented and exhibited for sport and effect at these great conventions and barbecues: live eagles perched upon loco-

motive log cabins; the 'coon, too, busy and playful; beside the cabin door rested barrels of hard cider, from which the beverage flowed freely to all comers. The string to lift the usual wooden latch hung out, indicating that any one was welcome to walk in and partake of the laboring man's hospitality. There was a gush of good feeling, animation, hope, and confidence everywhere pervading the people, which forbade inactivity or despondency.

But the West, if possible, surpassed the East in its monster assemblages. At Cincinnati, at Nashville, at Indianapolis, at St. Louis, at the Tippecanoe battle-ground, at Cleveland, at Fort Meigs, and at Dayton, the people assembled could only be counted or estimated *by the acre.* The Dayton assemblage, especially, was such a multitude that, "behold, no man could number them." Here were Mr. Clay, Mr. Crittenden, Governor Vance, Mr. Graves, Governor Corwin, and many other celebrities, whose eloquence was called into service. It was estimated that from seventy-five to one hundred thousand people were there assembled.

A marked feature of these assemblages was the great number of women mingling in them,—the wives, daughters, and mothers of the hardy and well-to-do yeomen of the country,—who took part in the singing. Among the devices displayed in such abundance, the grotesque and comical were not unfrequent. Here met the eye a ludicrous representation of a fight between the 'coon and the fox (the emblem of Van Buren), in which the 'coon was always uppermost and giving the fox a terrible thrashing. Again might be seen a set-to between Harrison and Van Buren; "Old Hickory," the trainer and second of the latter, showing evident concern that his "little pet" was weak, dispirited, and getting worsted, while Harrison, backed and cheered by thousands of people crying, "Hurrah for Old Tip!" stood self-poised and confident, "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." These representations were infinitely varied, sometimes irresistibly provocative of roars of merriment, all of which served to keep up the fun, hilarity, and general good feeling.

With the election in November—which resulted in Harrison's

election by two hundred and thirty-four electoral votes of the two hundred and ninety-four cast, and a Whig majority in the House of Representatives of the United States—the national carnival ceased, and the people returned once more to their regular daily avocations, with cheerful hearts and hopeful feelings.

"What has caused this great commotion, motión, motion,
Our country through?
It is the ball a rolling on
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too,
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too."—*Campaign Song.*

The original or special friends of General Harrison very naturally claimed that it was his popularity which produced such an unprecedented "commotion" "our country through." But in this they were mistaken. The popularity of no one man could have produced such a universal outpouring of the people from day to day for weeks and months unceasingly, abandoning everything else, and giving time and money unstintedly to carry the election. General Harrison was but the figure-head,—the representative of the Whig party for the time being. Few had ever heard of him. The people knew from history and the campaign papers that he had been a general in the then late war with England; that he had won a victory at the battle of Tippecanoe over the British and Indians, and also at the battle of the Thames, in Canada, where Tecumseh, the noted Indian warrior, was killed. This was enough to make a hero of him by those who had a purpose to serve in doing so. As to his fitness for the Presidency, the people knew nothing and cared nothing. A change in the government was what they desired and were determined to have. General Jackson had played the mischief with the currency and the business of the country generally by his obstinacy in trying "experiments," his "pet banks," and his promises of gold and silver; in lieu of which the people had treasury notes and a "shinplaster currency." He had himself alone made Mr. Van Buren his successor. Add to all this the exposure of the astounding defalcations of hosts of government officers, and we shall have no difficulty in accounting for the great movement of the people.

Finding what headway the Whigs were making by their songs and glee-clubs, the Democrats attempted to get up similar performances, but they were only imitations, and very poor at that: their songs were both spiritless and ridiculous, and their singers, what few they could muster, no better than their songs, and only made themselves laughing-stocks of the people. But in the next Presidential campaign, that of 1844, the Democrats showed that they had learned a lesson of the Whigs, and profited by it, being nearly a match for their opponents in rhyming and singing performances,—the songs of both during that campaign being generally ridiculous doggerel.

CHAPTER VI.

General Harrison inaugurated.—His Cabinet.—He issues a Proclamation calling an Extra Session of Congress on the 31st of May.—Is taken ill.—Dies.—His Funeral.—John Tyler assumes the Duties and Title of President.—Issues an Address to the People.—Retains the Harrison Cabinet.—The Extra Session of Congress held.—Civil Service Reform.—Mr. Webster's Letter.—Measures proposed at the Extra Session.—Mr. Ewing's Report strongly recommends a United States Bank.—A Bill to establish a *Fiscal Bank* passed.—Vetoed by the President.—The Democrats visit the President in a Body and congratulate him.—Mr. Clay ludicrously depicts the Scene at the White House.—A Second Fiscal Corporation Bill brought forward.—Second Veto.—Resignation of the Cabinet.—Mr. Webster remains.—He negotiates with Lord Ashburton.—The Webster-Ashburton Treaty.—New Cabinet appointed.—Rupture of the Whigs with John Tyler.—First Regular Session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress.—A Prolonged Contest in the House on the Right of Petition.—Gilmer, Rhett, and Proffit ask to be excused from serving on the Committee of Foreign Relations with Mr. Adams.—They are excused.—Lord Morpeth and Mr. Dickens.—Mr. Clay resigns his Seat, and takes leave of the Senate.—Parting between him and Mr. Calhoun.—Speech of Mr. Clay at Lexington, 1843.—Almost a Duel between Mr. Stanley and Mr. Wise.—Reverdy Johnson, Francis Granger, Mr. Saltonstall, A. H. H. Stuart, Mr. Lane, Caleb Cushing.—The Revenue Bill passed, and vetoed.—A Bill passed requiring Members of Congress to be elected uniformly by Districts.—Revenue Bill.—Mr. Adams's Report; severely censures the President for his Vetoes.—The President's Protest.—Another Revenue Bill: Tariff Act of 1842.—Earnest Debate in the Senate on this Bill; it is passed.—Congress adjourns 13th September, 1842.—Millard Fillmore.—Mr. Tyler changes his Policy in regard to Removals and Appointments.—Jonathan Roberts, Collector at Philadelphia, and General Solomon Van Rensselaer, Postmaster at Albany, removed.—Mr. Webster still in the Cabinet.—His Speech in Faneuil Hall: inquires, "Where shall I go?"—Morse's Telegraph.—A Pleasing Episode in the House of Representatives: the Presentation of the Sword and Staff of Washington.—Winding up of the Twenty-Seventh Congress.—Last Night of the Session.—Nominations of Mr. Wise and Mr. Cushing rejected by the Senate.—Samuel F. Vinton.—Mr. Cushing sent to China.—Mr. Webster leaves the Cabinet.—Mr. Tyler visits the North and East.—Death of Mr. Legaré.—Mr. Upshur appointed Secretary of State.—Mr. Proffit sent Minister to Brazil.—Gilmer's Intrigue for Texas.—Meeting of the Twenty-Eighth Congress: New Members, Solomon Foot, Jacob Collamer, Hamilton Fish, Hannibal Hamlin, E. Joy Morris, Alexander Ramsey, Washington Hunt, Alexander H. Stephens, Robert Toombs, Robert C. Schenck,

James Pollock, Stephen A. Douglas, Howell Cobb, J. J. Hardin, John Wentworth, John P. Hale.—Notice of Mr. Hale.—Mr. Webster's Readmission into the Whig Party; how it was done.—Judge Willie P. Mangum.—The Girard Will Case before the Supreme Court.—John Sergeant.—Cabinet Changes.—Terrible Catastrophe: Bursting of a Gun on the Princeton.—Further Organization of the Cabinet.—Mr. Calhoun Secretary of State.—Movements of Aspirants to the Presidency.—Mr. Clay's Southern Tour.—Treaty of Annexation of Texas.—Whig National Convention at Baltimore.—Mr. Clay nominated for President.—Democratic National Convention.—Mr. Polk nominated for President.—Terrible Riots in Philadelphia.—First Public Working of Morse's Telegraph.—Further Changes in the Cabinet.—John C. Spencer.—Progress of the Presidential Campaign.—The Kane Letter.—The Campaign in Pennsylvania.—The Campaign in New York.—Clay's Alabama Letter.—The Plaquemine Frauds.—Second Session of the Twenty-Eighth Congress.—Abrogation of the Twenty-First Rule.—Mr. Hoar's Expulsion from South Carolina.—Duel between Mr. Clingman and Mr. Yancey.—Acquisition of Texas.—The End of Mr. Tyler's Administration.

MARCH 4, 1841.—GENERAL HARRISON INAUGURATED PRESIDENT.

SOON after it was known that General Harrison was elected President, he took occasion to visit Mr. Clay at Ashland, where he was received and treated as a distinguished guest. On the day after his arrival, a free consultation was held by him with Mr. Clay in regard to public affairs. General Harrison having brought up the subject of his cabinet, Mr. Clay promptly and explicitly informed him that he must not consider him within the scope of selection for any position whatever, as he had fully determined not to hold any under the new administration: at the same time, however, he assured General Harrison that all his measures should have his cordial support, unless he might have reason to disapprove of any one or more of them; and should this be the case, he begged him to be assured that whatever objection he might feel it his duty to make would be first made known to him, General Harrison, and not to others. "There will be those," said Mr. Clay, "who will endeavor to sow tares between you and myself,—who have, indeed, already attempted to do so,—to create distrust and jealousies and ill feeling between us. I beg you, therefore, to listen to no reports in regard to my opinions or intended course in regard to this or that measure or act of yours: whatever my opinions or course may be, you shall be the first to hear of them from me."

General Harrison thanked him for his frankness and candor,

expressed his regret that he would not accept the position of Secretary of State, which he had come to tender him, and denied that any attempt had been made to create any ill-feeling on his part towards Mr. Clay. He further said that if Mr. Clay had accepted the position of Secretary of State, it had been his intention to offer the Treasury department to Mr. Webster; but as Mr. Clay had declined a seat in the cabinet, he should not offer one to Mr. Webster.

To this conclusion Mr. Clay objected, remarking that Mr. Webster was not peculiarly fitted for the position of Secretary of the Treasury, but was eminently so for that of Secretary of State. Besides, the appointment of Mr. Webster to that office would inspire confidence in the administration abroad, which was highly important, considering our present relations with England. Mr. Clay urged this appointment with such force that General Harrison finally concurred in his views, and agreed to tender the position to Mr. Webster.

On the day of his inauguration he was escorted to the Capitol by a cavalcade of citizens and several military companies; but, instead of taking a carriage, he preferred riding on horseback, and that, too, without an overcoat or gloves, although the weather was excessively disagreeable, a sharp, cold northeast wind prevailing the whole day.

Arrived at the Capitol, General Harrison repaired to the Senate, then in session, and took the oath of office. From thence he proceeded to the platform at the east front of the Capitol, which had been fitted for the purpose, and delivered his inaugural. In doing this he stood bareheaded, in a frock-coat, without overcoat, with bare hands, facing the keen nor'-easter, a full hour and a half, every one but himself suffering from exposure to the piercing blast, though protected by thick cloaks and overcoats. Of this I can speak feelingly, as I sat within a few feet of him.

But there came an end to the inaugural, to the great relief of Senators, judges of the Supreme Court, foreign ministers, and others; and then the President remounted his horse, and was escorted by the military and the multitude to the White House. That he was not prostrated the next day by pneumonia was a

matter of wonder to many. But he had thus far successfully defied the elements, and showed that he had the vigor of a young man, or, at least, that he could not be charged with the feebleness of an old one.

As usual, an extra session of the Senate had been called by the retiring President to act upon such nominations as might be made by the incoming President; and General Harrison, on the day after his inauguration, nominated the following gentlemen as his cabinet: Daniel Webster, of Massachusetts, Secretary of State; Thomas Ewing, of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury; John Bell, of Tennessee, Secretary of War; George E. Badger, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; Francis Granger, of New York, Postmaster-General; John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, Attorney-General.

Upon assuming their duties, the new administration found the country in a most helpless condition, burdened with debt, with an empty treasury, credit prostrate, post-notes falling due, and large amounts already due, with no means provided to meet them. Under the compromise tariff act of 1833 the rate of duties on foreign importations had run down to the lowest point, twenty-five per cent., which furnished a revenue entirely inadequate to meet the necessary expenditures of the government economically administered, far less the expenditures of a reckless and wasteful administration and its large defalcations.

It was imperatively necessary that the tariff should be revised with a view to an increase of revenue; that the currency should be improved; that provision should be made to pay off or fund the accumulated public debt; and that life should be infused into the general business of the country, now in a comatose state.

In view of the condition of the country, and believing that existing evils could be remedied only by national legislation, the President called an extra session of Congress, to meet on the 31st day of May.

But, as Mr. Clay had foreseen, and had foretold to General Harrison, there were those who endeavored to sow tares between them; and they succeeded.

Calling upon Mr. Clay one day after the close of the execu-

tive session of the Senate, I found him alone, pacing his room in great perturbation. He had just received a note from the President, which he still held in his hand, the purport of which was a suggestion from the President that whatever Mr. Clay might wish to communicate, or whatever suggestions he might think proper to make to him, the President, had better be communicated in writing, as frequent personal interviews between them might give occasion for remark, or excite the jealousy of others.

Crumpling the note in his hand with an energy that showed the state of his feelings, he said, "And it has come to this! I am civilly but virtually requested not to visit the White House, —not to see the President personally, but hereafter only communicate with him in writing! The prediction I made to him at Ashland last fall has been verified. Here is my table loaded with letters from my friends in every part of the Union [taking up several large bundles], applying to me to obtain offices for them, when I have not one to give, nor influence enough to procure the appointment of a friend to the most humble position!"

He continued to pace the room, greatly excited and chafed. He was not to be crossed with impunity, nor did he bear contumely with the meekness of a Quaker. With these feelings he left Washington the next day for Kentucky, but, on reaching Baltimore, was taken sick, and remained there a week or more, unable to proceed. No interview ever took place between him and General Harrison after the receipt of the note mentioned.

"CIVIL SERVICE REFORM."

Although General Jackson had in his first inaugural falsely charged Mr. Adams's administration with "bringing the patronage of the Federal government in conflict with the freedom of elections," yet under his administration and that of Mr. Van Buren the practice of government officers actively interfering in and controlling elections was first witnessed, and was open, undisguised, and shameless.

Coming into power as a *reform* party, it became the duty of the Whigs to correct this—then considered—corrupting abuse. So soon, therefore, as the attention of the new administration

could be turned to it, the following circular, addressed to the several heads of departments, was issued and published by the Secretary of State:

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE, March 20, 1841.

"TO THE HON. , SECRETARY OF :

"SIR,—The President is of opinion that it is a great abuse to bring the patronage of the general government into conflict with the freedom of elections; and that this abuse ought to be corrected wherever it may have been permitted to exist, and to be prevented in future.

"He therefore directs that information be given that partisan interference in popular elections, whether of State officers or officers of this government, and for whomsoever or against whomsoever it may be exercised, or the payment of any contribution or assessment on salaries or official compensation for party or election purposes, will be regarded by him as cause of removal.

"It is not intended that any officer shall be restrained in the free and proper expression and maintenance of his opinions respecting public men or public measures, or in the exercise, to the fullest degree, of the constitutional right of suffrage. But persons employed under the government and paid for their services out of the public treasury are not expected to take an active or officious part in attempts to influence the minds or votes of others; such conduct being deemed inconsistent with the spirit of the Constitution and the duties of public agents acting under it; and the President is resolved, so far as depends upon himself, that, while the exercise of the elective franchise by the people shall be free from undue influence of official station and authority, opinion shall also be free among the officers and agents of the government.

"The President wishes it further to be announced, and distinctly understood, that from all collecting and disbursing officers promptitude in rendering accounts and entire punctuality in paying balances will be rigorously exacted. In his opinion it is time to return, in this respect, to the early practice of the government, and to hold any degree of delinquency on the part of those intrusted with the public money just cause of

immediate removal. He deems the severe observance of this circular to be essential to the public service, as every dollar lost to the treasury by unfaithfulness in office creates a necessity for a new charge upon the people.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"Signed, DANIEL WEBSTER,
"*Secretary of State.*"

At a subsequent period, during Mr. Tyler's administration, Mr. Crittenden introduced a bill in the Senate, conceived in the spirit of Mr. Webster's circular, entitled "A bill to prevent the interference of certain Federal officers in elections;" for which Mr. Rives, of Virginia, offered a substitute, declaring "that it is highly improper for officers depending on the Executive of the Union to attempt to control or influence the free exercise of the elective right, and that measures ought to be adopted by Congress to restrain by law all interference of Federal officers with elections otherwise than by giving their own votes."

No definite action ever took place on these; but they show what were then the ideas of eminent statesmen as to what "civil service reform" ought to accomplish.

In accord with the above is a portion of the "Platform" of the Republican National Convention of 1872, as follows:

"Any system of the civil service under which the subordinate positions of the government are considered rewards for mere party zeal is fatally demoralizing; and we therefore favor a reform of the system by laws which shall abolish the evils of patronage, and make honesty, efficiency, and fidelity essential qualifications for public positions, without practically creating a life-tenure of office."

But has that party been guided by this portion of its platform in its disposal of public patronage? Does the honest, capable, faithful clerk feel secure in his office? Why, then, so much uneasiness, anxiety, and apprehension from time to time, and almost the whole time, among the clerks in the departments and the subordinates in the customs? Why so many changes? In his "Life of Marlborough" Alison has said, "The theory of governing by the promotion of merit without

distinction of party, and of being regulated only by the public good, sounds well, and has often captivated the most noble and generous of men. But it has never yet succeeded in practice; and every government attempted on such a basis has speedily gone to pieces on the first serious crisis. . . . Individual interest is the ruling principle of the vast majority in every rank; and, as no government can long exist without the support of the majority, the foundations of power must always be laid in the interests of some great class of society or party in the state. . . . A government based on the general good, irrespective of factions, may be an object of admiration to posterity, which is beyond the interests of the moment; but it is sure to lose the confidence of the present, which is entirely governed by it; and, in public lauded by all, it will be in reality supported by none."

The course pursued by President Adams, and that of Andrew Jackson, form a striking contrast, and strongly illustrate and confirm Mr. Alison's remarks. We may regret that an administration cannot sustain itself in power by consulting only the public good and by appointing the best men to office irrespective of their party predilections; but so long as self-interest has a more powerful influence upon men than the welfare of the nation, so long will the multitude attach themselves to the party which is most likely to gratify their ambitious but selfish desires, even by the sacrifice of the public weal. Selfish human nature says, "Let every man look out for himself, and the public take care of itself;" and this motive of action eventually produces dishonesty in office, peculation, bribery, theft, and robbery,—a general degeneracy and demoralization not only of those in public stations, but of the whole people of the nation. Of this the events which have occurred since the famous announcement of Marcy, that "to the victors belong the spoils of office," furnish abundant proof.

Power is itself corrupting, and a party which has long held it is but too apt to become profligate and heedless of public censure, and consequently to incur defeat at the hands of an incensed people. But in all such cases the hope of having a new distribution of offices is the principal motive of the leading *outs*, who desire to occupy the official seats of the *ins*.

One of the greatest evils attending the distribution of patronage at the present time, as for some years past, is the power given to Senators and members of the House, in a great degree, not only to control appointments in their own States and districts, but to interfere in the appointment of heads of bureaus and clerks in the departments; thereby exercising executive as well as legislative powers. I have seen the working of this usurpation sufficiently to enable me to speak earnestly and most decidedly in its condemnation. It is bad enough when *men* are put into or kept in places by the sole influence of a member of Congress, but it is much worse when the appointee and *favorite* is a female, especially if young and handsome; for in all such cases scandal is on the alert, and her malignant tongue is never at rest.

The frequent changes of inspectors of customs, appraisers, weighers and gaugers, and other public officers have been most impolitic and injudicious, and unquestionably tend to make them dishonest. When the government shall treat its employés as judicious men of business treat theirs,—paying them a fair compensation, and leaving undisturbed those who have proved competent, honest, and faithful,—it will be ably and faithfully served: but never till this old Washington and Adams policy shall be adopted.

PRESIDENT HARRISON'S SICKNESS AND DEATH.

Against the urgent remonstrances of his friends, the President continued to rise at six o'clock in the morning, to go out and walk, usually to the market on market-days, without the protection of an overcoat, and to entertain visitors till one o'clock at night.

Bearing in mind that he had, before he came to Washington, been accustomed to live in a plain and simple way,—breakfasting at seven or eight o'clock, dining on simple fare at one, and retiring early, and that here he breakfasted at nine, dined at six, retired at one, and rose at five,—can it be cause of wonder that his system (he was sixty-nine years of age) gave way, refusing to bear this heavy and unaccustomed tax? It was alleged at the time by the Democratic press, and with such

emphasis and persistency as to create a general belief, that General Harrison's death was caused by the host of applicants for office who rushed to Washington, filled the White House, beset the President, and worried his life out.

There was not a particle of truth in this assertion. His death was the inevitable result of the causes I have mentioned, —the overtaxing of his physical powers, and imprudent exposure to the cold, piercing winds and storms which prevailed that spring. He fell a victim to an over-estimate of the strength of his constitution and physical powers, not unwarned by his friends, whose kindly suggestions were not only unheeded, but seemed to annoy him.

"Sit mihi fas audita loqui."

After an illness of a week or ten days, General Harrison passed away. His death was an astounding shock to the country. He was the first President who had died in office. Fifty years had the government existed under the Constitution, and no shaft of the "grim conqueror" had ever penetrated the Presidential mansion. It was an event that seemed impossible to happen; one never anticipated, or thought of, or properly prepared for, by the American people or the politicians. True, a Vice-President was always elected with the President, but with no expectation that he would ever be called upon to perform the functions of President, and so useless was he considered that he had been wittily styled "his superfluous Excellency." Now the people awoke to the fact that he whom they had elected as Vice-President, and whom they only knew as "Tyler too," was to become President. Now, for the first time, the universal inquiry was anxiously made, Who is he? What sort of a man is he? Is he a thorough Whig?

The death of Harrison was a terribly saddening blow to the country, and shrouded it in the habiliments of a woe most deeply and sincerely felt. Everywhere were seen the sable demonstrations of the country's grief. In Washington, the Executive mansion, all the public buildings, and most of the private dwellings, even the lowliest tenements, the abodes of poverty, were draped in black, even were it but the smallest

scrap of dingy crape; however small, it betokened the grief of the lowly inmates. Business was suspended, and shops and stores were closed, especially on the day of his funeral.

Immediately on his death, a messenger was dispatched with an express steamer to Mr. Tyler, asking his presence at Washington. He arrived in time to attend the funeral. This was conducted with appropriate pomp and solemnity. The United States troops at and within reach of Washington, the volunteers of the District of Columbia, and several regiments from Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other places formed a part of the cavalcade. The body was borne to the Congressional Cemetery on a splendid car, decorated with black plumes and drawn by six white horses; and the coffin was wrapped in a large United States flag. Major-General Scott was in command, assisted by his aids and numerous marshals on horseback. Besides the military, many civic societies were in the procession, which extended from the Executive mansion to the Capitol, various bands pealing forth solemn, mournful strains.

Mr. Tyler's countenance at the funeral indicated intense thought, "not,"—as a shrewd, observant lady, who watched him closely, remarked,—"as if he were thinking of what was then and there passing, but as if he were laying deep plans for the future."

JOHN TYLER ASSUMES THE DUTIES AND TITLE OF PRESIDENT.

The first question to be settled upon Mr. Tyler's entering upon the discharge of the duties of chief magistrate of the Union was the title he was to bear. The subject had been considered by the cabinet of the late President, who arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Tyler must, while performing the functions of President, bear the title of "Vice-President acting President;" and it has been stated that this opinion of the cabinet was communicated to him before his arrival at Washington.

This did not accord with his views and ambition. Whether any discussion of the subject took place between him and the cabinet is not known; it is only known that he was by the Constitution clothed with all the powers and required to perform all the duties of President: he determined to be curtailed of none

of the dignities and emoluments of the high office which had devolved upon him, and he therefore assumed the title of President.

On the morning after the publication of his address I called upon the President at his rooms, then at the "Indian Queen" (Brown's Hotel), now the Metropolitan. I found him affable, pleasant, and disposed to talk. His address being mentioned, I told him I was gratified, and I knew others were, that he had come out so decided a Whig. After perhaps twenty minutes' conversation, he said, "If the Democrats and myself ever come together, *they* must come to me." The remark struck me with surprise, and drew from me some observation, to which he replied, "I shall certainly never go to them."

How came this union in his head? But time passed on, and the remark was partially forgotten until subsequent events gave it significance.

EXTRA SESSION OF CONGRESS, 1841.

Pursuant to the proclamation issued by President Harrison, Congress convened on the 31st day of May. The House was organized by the election of John White, of Kentucky, as Speaker. There were several other aspirants for this position in the party, whose disappointment probably had not a little to do with their subsequent relations with the Whig party, and with the course pursued by Mr. Tyler.

The message, as a whole, was a plain, creditable state paper, commendably brief. On the subject of a fiscal agent, or national bank, the President spoke with all the caution and ambiguity of a Talleyrand. If he had any definite ideas on the subject, his language very effectually concealed them, and left those before in doubt in regard to his views on that most important subject in as complete "obfuscation" as ever Delphic response left a seeker after knowledge of future events.

The Whigs, however, like others, ready to believe what they wished to be true, found comfort in some portions of his message. The message shadowed forth a bank, or fiscal agent of some kind, as necessary to the operations of the Treasury, the collecting and disbursing of the revenues, the general prosperity of the country, and the improvement of the currency.

Mr. Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury, in his report to Congress, strongly recommended the creation of a national bank, or fiscal agent, and the President having signified a desire that Congress should call upon the Secretary of the Treasury for a plan of such an institution, a call was made by the Senate, in response to which the Secretary sent his report on the subject, designating the institution "The Fiscal Bank of the United States." It was to be incorporated in the District of Columbia, thus avoiding supposed constitutional State-rights scruples. And, further to avoid these, power was given to establish branches only with the consent of the State in which the branch was to be located. This report was referred to the committee on finance, of which Mr. Clay was chairman.

It was known that Mr. Tyler had some Virginia State-rights crotchets in his head about a national bank, and these it was thus sought to avoid running foul of. It was known, too, that he had a great antipathy to the name of *Bank*, and, to avoid the use of this odious term, had suggested calling whatever institution might be created, a "Fiscal Institute," or "Fiscal Agent," or "Fiscal Corporation." There was something quite ludicrous in these whims about a name, but, as he had the power to veto, his whims, however absurd, were not to be lightly treated; and therefore, though there was something exceedingly *outré* and revolting in the term *Fiscal Bank*, yet "what's in a name? A rose by any other name may smell as sweet," and so Mr. Tyler's notions were acceded to, and "Fiscal Bank" it was called.

Pending the passage of this bill through the two Houses of Congress, it was whispered about, and rumors of the kind got into distant papers, that Mr. Tyler would veto it, and that a rupture between him and Mr. Clay was imminent.

What was the origin of these rumors? Whence came they? Why should he veto a measure which either he matured himself, or was carefully drawn up to conform to his notions? Mr. Clay and the President had then had no personal falling out, no disagreement in regard to the measure, and the former in preparing his bill adhered mainly to the plan submitted by Mr. Ewing, which, as Mr. Webster stated in his Fanueil Hall speech, "received the approbation of every member of the cabi-

net, as the only plan which would be likely to succeed, considering the opinions of the individual whom we had all agreed to put in the second place in the government." Nevertheless, rumors of a division, or disagreement, between Mr. Tyler and the party to whom he owed his election as Vice-President, and consequently to whom he was indebted for his present position, became more and more rife, and were spread abroad with more and more confidence, especially by those who were supposed to be intimate at the White House and to speak from the inspiration of its oracle.

Meantime, the Whigs were not supine: one of their great measures, namely, the bill for the distribution of the proceeds of the sales of public lands, was passed on the 6th of July, and became a law by the signature of the President.

The Fiscal Bank bill passed the Senate, July 28, by a vote of 26 to 23; and the House, without amendment, August 6, by 128 to 97. It then went to the President, and was by him returned to the Senate, on the 16th of August, with his veto.

The commotion created by this act of the President was very great, notwithstanding the constant reports and confident assertions that had filled the ears of the Whigs for weeks—almost months—previous. On the side of the Democrats, all was elation and joy; among the Whigs, deep chagrin, disappointment, and bitterness.

Neither Whigs nor Democrats could speak calmly on the subject, the former feeling that their party was betrayed, while the latter saw that, though terribly defeated in the campaign of "eighteen forty," they were now to enjoy the substantial fruits of victory.

This feeling of gratulation among the Democrats was too strong to be restrained; it must be manifested by some demonstration, must find expression in some fitting act: how better could it be expressed than by going in a body to the White House and pouring forth their thanks, laudations, and congratulations to John Tyler? A happy idea! no sooner suggested than adopted. Forthwith, on the memorable night of the 16th of August, the day the veto had been sent in, a considerable number of Senators took up the line of march to the

Executive mansion, which they entered, headed by Mr. Buchanan, who acted as master of ceremonies on the grand occasion; and hardly had they entered when a much larger body, consisting of members of the House, and headed by Mr. Gilmer, made its appearance. Every Senator and member was introduced to President Tyler, and there were few who did not extol his patriotism and congratulate him on his independence of party trammels and dictatorship. They knew Mr. Tyler's weak points, and how to tickle them. In their eyes, if he was to believe their fulsome commendations, he was the savior of his country,—a Washington in moral dignity and purity, a Jackson in firmness of purpose and disregard of the howlings of disappointed ambition: truly and nobly had he shown himself worthy the high office he held. Among those present on that memorable evening were a large number of ladies, the wives of Democratic Senators and members, whose presence was animating, especially as they were in fine spirits and willing to aid their husbands and *party* by exerting all their wit, and their conversational and fascinating powers, not only to please generally, but to win with their blandishments one who already stood half-way between the camp of his own party and that of their opponents. But such was the joyous feeling of the Democrats that it required no effort on their part to make the occasion a hilarious one, especially as champagne flowed like water, and at every "pop" of a bottle off went a joke or sarcasm at the expense of Mr. Clay personally, or of the Whig party generally.

As rapidly flew champagne corks, "unheeded flew the hours" in uproarious hilarity, "till the clock told twelve," and then came the breaking up of this happy party.

The extraordinary gathering and manifestations of exultation which took place at the White House on the evening of this memorable 16th of August soon were bruited abroad, and were of too interesting a character to be overlooked by Mr. Clay. Accordingly, in making some remarks on a resolution of inquiry offered by Mr. Woodbury, Mr. Clay, a few days after, seized the occasion to notice them in his own inimitable and playful manner, creating quite a stir among some of the *dramatis*

personæ, and great amusement in the Senate and galleries. It must be premised that it had been alleged that on the night of the visit of the Democrats to the President, the White House had been beset by persons entertaining very different feelings from those exulting within, and that unseemly disturbances had taken place on the part of those outside. Mr. Woodbury's resolution of inquiry had reference to these disturbances, and hence gave Mr. Clay an excellent opportunity to bring forth his amusing drama.

Mr. Clay said, in a very pleasant manner, "An honorable Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. Woodbury] proposed some days ago a resolution of inquiry into certain disturbances which are said to have occurred at the Presidential mansion on the night of the memorable 16th of August. If any such proceedings did occur, they were certainly very wrong and highly culpable. The chief magistrate, whoever he may be, should be treated by every good citizen with all becoming respect, if not for his personal character, on account of the exalted office he holds for and from the people. And I will here say that I read with great pleasure the acts and resolutions of an early meeting, promptly held by the orderly and respectable citizens of this metropolis, in reference to, and in condemnation of, those disturbances.* But, if the resolution had been adopted, I had intended to move for the appointment of a select committee, and that the honorable Senator from New Hampshire himself should be placed at the head of it, with a majority of his friends. And I will tell you why, Mr. President. I did hear that about eight or nine o'clock on that same night of the famous 16th instant there was an irruption into the President's house of the whole Loco-foco party in Congress; and I did not know but that the alleged disorders might have grown out of or had some connection with that fact. I understand that the whole party were there. No spectacle, I am sure, could have been more supremely amusing and ridiculous. If I could have been

* A meeting of the citizens of Washington was held, Colonel William Seaton, mayor, presiding, which passed resolutions strongly condemning these disturbances and expressing deep regret that any indignity should have been offered to the chief magistrate of the nation.

in a position in which, without being seen, I could have witnessed that most extraordinary reunion, I should have had an enjoyment which no dramatic performance could possibly afford. I think I can now see the principal *dramatis personæ* who figured in the scene. There stood the grave and distinguished Senator from South Carolina——"

Mr. Calhoun here instantly rose, and earnestly insisted on explaining; but Mr. Clay refused to be interrupted or to yield the floor.

"There, I say, I can imagine stood the Senator from South Carolina,—tall, care-worn, with furrowed brow, haggard cheek and eye, intensely gazing, looking as if he were dissecting the last and newest abstraction which sprang from some metaphysician's brain, and muttering to himself, in half-uttered sounds, 'This is indeed a *crisis!*' Then there was the Senator from Alabama [Mr. King], standing upright and gracefully, as if he were ready to settle in the most authoritative manner any question of *order* or of *etiquette* that might possibly arise between the high assembled parties on that new and unprecedented occasion. Not far off stood the honorable Senators from Arkansas and Missouri [Mr. Sevier and Mr. Benton], the latter looking at the Senator from South Carolina with an indignant curl on his lip and scorn in his eye, and pointing his finger with contempt towards that Senator [Calhoun], whilst he said, or rather seemed to say, 'He call himself a statesman! why, he has never even produced a decent humbug!'"

Mr. Benton.—"The Senator from Missouri was not there."

Mr. Clay.—"I stand corrected; I was only imagining what he would have said if he had been there. Then there stood the Senator from Georgia [Mr. Cuthbert], conning over in his mind on what point he should make his next attack upon the Senator from Kentucky. On yonder ottoman reclined the other Senator from Missouri on my left [Mr. Linn], indulging, with smiles on his face, in pleasing meditations on the rise, growth, and future power of his new colony of Oregon. The honorable Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. Buchanan], I presume, stood forward as spokesman for his whole party; and, although I cannot pretend to imitate his well-known eloquence

and melodious voice,* I beg leave to make an humble essay towards what I presume to have been the kind of speech delivered by him on that august occasion:

"'May it please your Excellency: A number of your present political friends, late your political opponents, in company with myself, have come to deposit at your Excellency's feet the evidences of our loyalty and devotion; and they have done me the honor to make me the organ of their sentiments and feelings. We are here more particularly to present to your Excellency our grateful and most cordial congratulations on your rescue of the country from a flagrant and alarming violation of the Constitution by the creation of a Bank of the United States; and also our profound acknowledgments for the veto by which you have illustrated the wisdom of your administration and so greatly honored yourself. And we would dwell particularly on the unanswerable reasons and cogent arguments with which the notification of the act to the legislature had been accompanied. We had been, ourselves, struggling for days and weeks to arrest the passage of the bill, and to prevent the creation of the monster to which it gives birth. We had expended all our logic, exerted all our ability, employed all our eloquence; but, in spite of all our utmost efforts, the friends of your Excellency in the Senate and House of Representatives proved too strong for us. And we have now come most heartily to thank your Excellency that you have accomplished for us that against your friends which we, with our most strenuous exertions, were unable to achieve.'

"I hope the Senator will view with indulgence this effort to represent him, although I am but too sensible how far it falls short of the merits of the original. At all events, he will feel that there is not a greater error than was committed by the stenographer of the 'Intelligencer' the other day, when he put into my mouth a part of the honorable Senator's speech. I hope the honorable Senators on the other side of the chamber will pardon me for having conceived it possible that, amidst the popping of champagne, the intoxication of their joy, the

* Mr. Buchanan had a peculiarly sharp, nasal voice, the very opposite of "melodious." Mr. Clay, therefore, spoke ironically.

ecstasy of their glorification, they might have been the parties who created a disturbance of which they never could have been guilty had they waited for their '*sober* second thoughts.' I have no doubt the very learned ex-Secretary of the Treasury [Mr. Woodbury], who conducted that department with such distinguished ability and such happy results to the country [hundreds of defalcations—see S. S. Prentiss's speech], and who now has such a profound abhorrence of all taxes on tea and coffee, though in his own official reports he so distinctly recommended them, would, if appointed chairman of the committee, have conducted the investigation with that industry which so eminently distinguishes him, and would have favored the Senate with a report marked with all his accustomed precision and ability, and with perfect clearness."

This playful and good-humored escapade was charged with many keen shafts of irony that hit the mark, though they were sent forth with so much humor that even those who were hit were compelled to join in the general merriment which Mr. Clay's inimitable manner, in his "taking off" the several characters, created. It was a rare treat in the Senate. Mr. Calhoun was admirably depicted; and the representing him as "looking as if he were dissecting the last and newest *abstraction*," and uttering the words, "This is indeed a crisis!" was so well-aimed a hit at Mr. Calhoun's well-known peculiarities, that laughter was irresistible. And so of Colonel King, of Alabama, who was a nice, precise, natty gentleman, very tenacious of the observance of etiquette, who prided himself on a knowledge of the rules of the Senate, and was ever "ready to settle in the most authoritative manner any question of order or of etiquette that might arise." He was so exactly limned by Mr. Clay in the few words he devoted to him, that all who knew him personally could not but cry out, How life-like! Still, there was just enough of caricature in it to add greatly to the merriment, much to the colonel's chagrin, who was always as serious as an undertaker at a funeral, and deemed this sort of thing quite "out of order," and derogatory to the *dignity* of the Senate. In depicting Mr. Benton looking at Mr. Calhoun "with an indignant curl on his lip and scorn in his eye, pointing his

finger with contempt at the Senator, and seeming to say, 'He call himself a statesman! why, he has never even produced a decent humbug!'" Mr. Clay depicted the true feeling of the Missouri Senator towards Mr. Calhoun, and at the same time hit the former, who was considered by the public rather famous for producing humbugs. That shot carried two very keen shafts, though Benton was rather gratified than displeased by that part of the "fancy sketch" which characterized him.

But the principal figure of Mr. Clay's *dramatis personæ*, the chief actor in the drama, was Mr. Buchanan, and, if rumor was to be credited, Mr. Clay did not shoot wide of the mark in assigning him his part at the memorable gathering; while his own performance of it, as he imagined the Senator must have acted it, his imitation of Mr. Buchanan's peculiar nasal voice, pronunciation, and manner, were irresistibly laughable, and put even those who had not escaped in the very best humor.*

Mr. Buchanan took it in very good part, and gave Mr. Clay a Rowland for his Oliver, by describing another meeting on that memorable 16th of August; namely, a meeting of the sad, dispirited, chagrined Whigs in caucus, at which Mr. Clay was present, not quite so hilarious and jubilant as the one Mr. Clay had described; representing that some of the Whigs were for giving up, some deploring the hard fate of the Whig party,

* Mr. Buchanan having taken so prominent a part in the memorable White House congratulatory scene, it may somewhat surprise the unsophisticated novice in politics to read the following extract from a letter addressed by him to R. P. Letcher, dated April 17, 1841, just four months previous to this "scene," in which he gives his real opinion of Mr. Tyler in no ambiguous or very complimentary terms. He says, "Tyler and his cabinet are a poor concern [he was not speaking of himself and his cabinet in 1861, though his language is more applicable to that "concern" than to Tyler and his cabinet]; they live upon expedients from day to day, and have no settled principles by which to guide their conduct. The *toadies* flatter him with the belief that whilst the politicians are deadly hostile to him from jealousy of his rising fortunes, the people are everywhere rising *en masse* and coming to his rescue. . . . Unless I am greatly mistaken in the signs of the times, an attempt will be made to *head Mr. Clay* on the subject of a national bank. . . . Tyler and Webster then are to become the *chiefs* of the great Whig National Bank party, and Clay to be denounced for having *prevented* the adoption of his own favorite measure. So we go! For myself, I am a looker-on here in Vienna. I have been here long enough to understand the game, though *I never play myself*."

But he did, four months later, as we have seen.—N. S.

some declaring that "their voice was still for war" on "Captain Tyler," while the elegant language of one was heard above all the rest, declaring that he would "head him off or die."

The retort was a fair and good-humored one, and wound up the drama in a pleasant manner, no Senator's dinner being spoiled by rankling barbs left festering in the flesh. This impromptu dramatizing of events which had recently happened, introducing the actors, assigning to each his part, and in its performance exhibiting in a striking manner the peculiarities, idiosyncrasies and traits of character by which each was distinguished, was "an instance of that versatility of genius and presence of mind of which his [Mr. Clay's] parliamentary life was so full, and which generally gave him the advantage in sharp encounters."*

THE SECOND FISCAL BILL.—ITS ORIGIN AND FATE.

Upon the reception of the veto, the questions naturally arose among the Whigs, "What next? Is this the end? or can any bill be framed which will obtain the signature of the President?" While these questions were asked, Mr. Tyler himself apparently answered them by intimating in a very decided manner to Mr. Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury, not only his willingness but also his anxious desire to have another bill prepared and presented to Congress which should avoid the objections he had made to the one he vetoed. In his letter of resignation, dated September 11, 1841, addressed to the President, Mr. Ewing thus gives an account of the origin of this second bill:

"On the morning of the 16th of August I called at your chamber, and found you preparing the first veto message, to be dispatched to the Senate. The Secretary of War came in also, and you read a portion of the message to us. He observed that though the veto would create a great sensation in Congress, yet he thought the minds of our friends better prepared for it than they were some days ago, and he hoped it would be calmly received, especially as it did not shut out all hope of a bank. To this you replied that you really thought that there ought to be no difficulty about it; that you had sufficiently

* Mr. Benton's "Thirty Years' View."

indicated the kind of a bank you would approve, and that Congress might, if they saw fit, pass such a bill in three days."

Mr. Bell, in his letter of resignation, fully confirmed this statement of Mr. Ewing, and added some further particulars.

Mr. A. H. H. Stuart, of Virginia, relates an interview he had with Mr. Tyler on the 16th of August; that in that interview the President defined distinctly what kind of a bill he would sign,—precisely the bill called the Second Fiscal Agent bill, which he afterwards vetoed; and in closing the conference, and as Mr. Stuart was about to take his leave, the President said, "Now, Stuart, if you will send me this bill, I will sign it in twenty-four hours. . . . The President then told me," says Mr. Stuart, "to go to Mr. Webster and have the bill prepared at once. Holding me by his left hand and raising his right hand upwards, he exclaimed, with much feeling, 'Stuart, if you can be instrumental in passing this bill through Congress, I shall esteem you the best friend I have on earth.'"

Mr. Stuart went to Mr. Webster; a bill was prepared and submitted by Mr. Webster to the President, who approved it. "This was the same bill," says Mr. Berrien, "which subsequently passed both Houses of Congress, and which was returned by the President with his second veto."

On the 19th of August, the House being in committee of the whole on the state of the Union, Mr. Sergeant moved to take up House bill No. 14, being a bill reported some time previous from the select committee appointed by the House on the subject of the currency, entitled "A bill to incorporate the subscribers to the Fiscal Bank of the United States;" and this he moved to amend by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting the bill which had been so carefully prepared. Not a word or a letter had been stricken out or added after it left the hands of the President and he had declared he would sign it.

Mr. Sergeant made some remarks explaining the bill, and pointing out wherein it differed from the bill that had just been vetoed. The name was new, but there were those, he said, who entertained strong prejudices against the word *bank*, and therefore they had, in framing the bill, been careful not to use that

word. If the word remained anywhere in the bill, "let it go, let it go," said Mr. Sergeant.

Mr. Clay having addressed the Senate on the President's veto of the Fiscal Bank bill, and commented thereon with some causticity, and having spoken of a cabal which was said to control Mr. Tyler, Mr. Rives, of Virginia, who seemed to be the only friend Mr. Tyler had in the Senate, replied to him, and a rather sharp encounter followed.

Mr. Rives was a gentleman of refined manners; dignified and courteous, with great self-command; highly educated, not only in the ordinary branches of a collegiate course, but also as a lawyer and statesman. Possessed of an ample fortune, he read law, not with the intention of practicing at the bar, but as a part of the necessary studies of a statesman. Being the neighbor of the venerable Mr. Madison, he enjoyed the rare opportunity and felicity of growing up at the feet of the American Gamaliel and imbibing republican principles at their fountain.

He was an agreeable speaker,—ready in debate, plausible rather than profound, with more of the *suaviter in modo* than of the *fortiter in re*. He could fence deftly with the small sword of debate, but lacked the strength to wield the broadsword or battle-axe. A close student, and making public affairs the study of his life, he had a fund of political knowledge and historic lore, the command of which availed him much, and often gave him important advantages over others less accurately informed. Though highly respected by his fellow-Senators, Mr. Clay included, he was no match for the latter in a sharp encounter; indeed, no one in the Senate, composed as that body was, and had been for many years, of able and brilliant statesmen and jurists, was his equal in an unpremeditated discussion. As an illustration of Mr. Clay's power of speaking extempore, I may here relate that at this time the nomination of Edward Everett as minister to England was before the Senate, and had been for some time, his confirmation being strenuously opposed by Senators from the slave States for reasons connected with "the peculiar institution." After a laborious day, the Senate went into executive session, and took up the question of confirming Mr. Everett. The debate was

protracted to a late hour, and, as it was not expected to be closed and the vote taken before adjournment, Mr. Clay had left his seat and taken his hat to leave the chamber. Some remarks from a Southern Senator (said to be Mr. King, of Alabama) attracted his attention, and he remained, walking up and down, listening. The remarks became more and more objectionable to him, and the reasons assigned for opposing Mr. Everett such as he deemed highly unpatriotic, impolitic, and unjustifiable. His feelings became excited, and when the Senator took his seat he stepped into his own, and addressed the Vice-President in reply to the Senator, pouring forth a torrent of impassioned and overwhelming invective and argument such as my informants (Judge Mangum and Senator Simmons) stated they never before heard or could have conceived of. He seemed rapt, carried away, as if unconscious of what he was saying. On closing, the vote was taken, and Mr. Everett's nomination was confirmed by a large majority.

The "Fiscal Corporation" bill passed the House, and went to the Senate on the 23d of August, was passed by the latter without amendment on the 3d of September, and was sent to the President next day. There was great anxiety among the Whigs as to what the fate of the bill would be. Would it be signed, or would it share the fate of the former and be returned with a veto? These questions were earnestly asked, but no one could answer.

As the bill had been passed by both Houses of Congress just as it left the hands of the President, it was not a little extraordinary that there should be a doubt about its being signed; but while it had been passing through Congress there had been certain signs and hints and innuendoes and givings-out at and emanating from the White House which created apprehensions. All eyes were turned to the "New York Herald," which for some months had proved to be the indicator of what transpired and would take place at the White House. Accordingly, on the 7th September arrived here the "Herald" of the day preceding, containing a letter, dated on Saturday, the 4th, the day on which the bill was presented to the President, which, with remarkable accuracy, foreshadowed the objections which the

President presented to the bill in his veto message, which was sent to Congress on the 9th, five days after the letter was written, and which, the writer alleged, would be presented by President Tyler!

Were all, or was any one, of the cabinet consulted by the President in regard to this veto message, or informed by him what course he should pursue in regard to the bill? Not one. It was alleged that a certain "inner cabinet" were consulted by, or dictated to, the President; but no one of his constitutional advisers knew what he intended to do until they learned, as the rest of the world did, his determination from the correspondent of the "New York Herald," and saw the message in print!

Congress adjourned *sine die* on the 13th of September.

RESIGNATION OF THE CABINET.

On the 11th of September all the members of the cabinet, save Mr. Webster, sent their resignations to the President.

In tendering them, Messrs. Ewing, Bell, and Badger accompanied them with, or afterwards published, statements setting forth the causes which had induced them to take that step. Mr. Ewing, in justification of himself and the course he had taken, gave a narrative of the consultations and movements of the President and others, acting at his instance, out of which sprang the bill now vetoed. Speaking of the period during which the bill was prepared and was going through Congress, he said, "During this season of deep feeling and earnest exertion upon our part, while we were zealously devoting our talents and influence to serve and sustain you [the letter was addressed to Mr. Tyler], the very secrets of your cabinet councils made their appearance in an infamous paper printed in a neighboring city, the columns of which were daily charged with flattery of yourself and foul abuse of your cabinet. All this I bore; for I felt that my services, so long as they could avail, were due to the nation,—to that great and magnanimous people whose suffrages elevated your predecessor to the station which you now fill.

* * * * * * * *

"This bill, framed and fashioned according to your own

suggestions, was passed by large majorities through the two Houses of Congress, and sent to you, and you rejected it. Important as was the part which I had taken, at your request, in the origination of the bill, and deeply as I was committed for your action upon it, you never consulted me on the subject of the veto message. You did not even refer to it in conversation, and the first notice I had of its contents was derived from rumor. [The "New York Herald."]

* * * * * * * *

"Strange as it may seem, the veto message attacks in an especial manner the very provisions which were inserted at your request; and even the name of the corporation, which was not only agreed to by you, but especially changed to meet your expressed wishes, is made the subject of your criticism. . . . No doubt was thrown out on the subject by you until the letter of Mr. Botts came to your hands. Soon after the reading of that letter, you threw out intimations that you would veto the bill if it were not postponed. That letter I did and do most unequivocally condemn; but it did not affect the constitutionality of the bill, or justify you in rejecting it on that ground."

Mr. Bell and Mr. Badger followed with statements corroborating the allegations of Mr. Ewing. Mr. Crittenden simply addressed a brief note to the President tendering his resignation, on the ground that circumstances had occurred in the course of the President's administration, and chiefly by his exercise of the veto power, which constrained him to believe that his longer continuance in office as a member of his cabinet would be neither agreeable to him (the President), useful to the country, nor honorable to himself.

Mr. Granger simply resigned, making no public statement.

Mr. Webster, on the contrary, remained, addressing a note to the editors of the "National Intelligencer," stating that he remained in his place, first, because he had seen no sufficient reason for the dissolution of the late cabinet by the voluntary act of its own members; secondly, he stated that if he had seen reasons to resign he should not have done so without giving the President reasonable notice and affording him time

to select the hands to which he should confide the delicate and important affairs now pending in that department.

Mr. Webster winds up by throwing a dart at his late colleagues for resigning without giving the President reasonable notice, etc. How much ground there was for this censure will appear from the fact that, from the promptitude with which a new cabinet was appointed, no doubt existed that the President had already provided himself with new counselors, who were appointed on the 13th, two days after the resignations; and the conclusion is irresistible, from all the attending circumstances, that had the retiring members of the cabinet not resigned they would have been dismissed in a very brief period. They were, in truth, already virtually ignored, and treated as if it were the intention of the President to compel them to resign out of sheer self-respect.

Mr. Benton has stated that, notwithstanding the tone of Mr. Webster's letter, he had agreed to go out with his colleagues, and was expected to have done so at the time they sent in their resignations; but in the mean while means had been found to effect a change in his determination,—probably by disavowing the application of any part of the "New York Herald's" letter to him.

And now, what was that letter, and by whom written?

During the whole of the called session it was known that the "New York Herald" had a correspondent at Washington who had access to the President at all times, to whom matters were revealed known only to the President and his cabinet, and intentions as to the future confided of which the members of the cabinet were profoundly ignorant.

As early as the 12th day of June, the Herald's correspondent thus vaticinated: "If the influence of Mr. Clay shall carry through Congress a bank charter *conflicting at all with the President's constitutional notions*, it will be *vetoed* by John Tyler beyond a doubt, . . . *and probably carry John Tyler into the next Presidency*." "It will be vetoed," and it was vetoed. The writer spoke "by authority." But the particular letter of which Colonel Benton spoke, which was so offensive and insulting to the members of the cabinet, and which undoubtedly

had much influence in determining them to resign, was dated the 6th of September, and, among other things, contained what follows:

"The cabinet, one and all, are hard at work to allay all open evidences of a rupture, and counseling their friends to go home and raise the standard of revolt there, while their own efforts are directed to undermine and circumvent the President here. This is their game. Who would have believed that high-minded and honorable men (for such members of the cabinet ought to be) *would thus concert a system of party movement, by which to destroy the very man at whose will they hold their offices, and who is constitutionally responsible for all their official acts?* What treachery! what ingratitude! *Why do they not act like men, and at once give in their resignations, and suffer the President to bring to his aid such men as he has confidence in?*"

No doubt was entertained by the members of the cabinet when this appeared that this language—and there was more of it—was inspired, if not dictated, by Mr. Tyler, and that instead of dealing frankly with the members of his cabinet, and telling them that the time had come when, as they could no longer act harmoniously together, they must separate, he took this indirect course to compel them to resign. They did so, as the only means of preserving their self-respect.

It was fortunate for the country that Mr. Webster remained at his post, as there were serious matters of controversy between us and England, which he had the high honor and merit of settling by what is known as the Webster-Ashburton treaty. No one, perhaps, was so well fitted to carry on the negotiation with Lord Ashburton, and no one certainly could maintain the principles to be settled with greater ability and success, as the result proved.

The vacancies in the cabinet were filled with a celerity that left no doubt that the President had already provided for the occasion, anticipating its occurrence, or resolved that his cabinet should be re-organized. The following gentlemen were appointed to the several places mentioned, viz.: Walter Forward, of Pennsylvania (appointed First Comptroller under Gen-

eral Harrison), Secretary of the Treasury; John McLean, of Ohio (one of the Justices of the Supreme Court), Secretary of War; Abel P. Upshur, of Virginia, Secretary of the Navy; Hugh S. Legaré, of South Carolina, Attorney-General; Charles A. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, Postmaster-General. Judge McLean not accepting, John C. Spencer, of New York, was appointed Secretary of War.

These were all men of distinguished ability, John C. Spencer and Hugh S. Legaré of eminent national reputation. Mr. Upshur was a man of perhaps equal ability, but unknown out of Virginia.

RUPTURE BETWEEN THE WHIGS AND THE PRESIDENT.

After the veto of the "Fiscal Corporation" bill and the resignation of the five members of the cabinet, all intercourse between the Whigs and Mr. Tyler ceased, and a complete alienation took place. True, the new cabinet was composed of quasi Whigs, but this fact failed to inspire the party with confidence. The Whigs in Congress took council together, and resolved to separate themselves from a President in whom they could no longer confide.

A committee, consisting of Senators Berrien, of Georgia, Tallmadge, of New York, and Smith, of Indiana, and Representatives Everett, of Vermont, Mason, of Ohio, Kennedy, of Maryland, J. C. Clark, of New York, and Raynor, of North Carolina, was appointed to prepare an address, denominated a *Manifesto*, to the Whigs of the whole country. It was drawn up by Mr. Kennedy, reported to another meeting, adopted, and extensively circulated. It very ably, yet temperately, set forth the whole matter of difference between them and the President, —his equivocations and tergiversations,—in short, the causes which had brought about the rupture and alienation now existing between them.

The address counseled the Whigs to treat the President with all the respect due to the high station he filled, and to give him a fair, honest, and cordial support in all that was right, opposing, not factiously, whatever of his measures were wrong; but it utterly repudiated all responsibility, on their part, for the measures of his administration.

Colonel Benton has stated that, during the first week of the extra session, Mr. Gilmer, of Virginia, held a conversation with a Whig member of the House (was it Henry A. Wise?), and suggested to him that they might become important, leading men, and get the control of the government, by withdrawing Tyler from the Whig and making him the head of a third party. The scheme was based upon a knowledge of Mr. Tyler's character and antecedents, and upon a calculation that he would be dazzled with the idea of being the head of a third party, and let the government, through his own indolence and want of business habits, fall into the hands of those who pleased him. This was the scheme. The movement went on, and Mr. Tyler fell into it. "The new party germinated, microscopically small, but potent in the President's veto power." On the breach occurring between the Whigs and Mr. Tyler, "The Democracy," says Colonel Benton, "rejoiced, and patted Mr. Tyler on the shoulder,—even those who despised the new party. Mr. Tyler was greatly exalted." Yes, but, as we see, merely to encourage him in setting himself up against the Whigs and in maintaining the attitude which kept up the breach with them. Their flatteries were sinister, their caresses treacherous; but his vanity so blinded him that he could not see their true character, and convinced him that he was really the great, morally independent man they represented him to be.

FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS.

Congress again met on the first Monday of December, and the most noticeable part of President Tyler's message was the recommendation of the establishment of a board of exchequer at the seat of government, the plan of which was to be submitted to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury, and which, when submitted, was found to contain all the characteristics of a bank, and a government bank at that, within the control of the Executive,—a bank of discount and deposit, which should supply a national currency of paper money. The plan was modeled after the English Exchequer: it, however, found no favor in either House of Congress, and was soon rejected.

The singular spectacle was now presented of an administration without a party in Congress, and without friends, save a squad numbering less than a corporal's guard. Both Whigs and Democrats kept aloof from the President, and would become in no way responsible for his measures; yet the machinery of the government worked smoothly,—far more so than at the called session. Never were the executive and legislative branches of the government more independent of each other.

A GREAT CONTEST FOR THE RIGHT OF PETITION.—MORE EXCITING SCENES IN THE HOUSE.—MR. ADAMS, THE CHAMPION OF THE RIGHT OF PETITION, IS FIERCELY ASSAILED BY WISE, GILMER, AND MARSHALL.

Commencing on the 14th of January, 1842, for two weeks the House of Representatives was almost a continual scene, from day to day, of excitement, disorder, heated and acrimonious speeches, and confusion.

The scene began by Mr. Adams offering, in the morning, as usual, a large number of petitions, some praying one thing and some another, all of which were, of course, rejected. He then offered what purported to be the proceedings of a meeting of citizens of Habersham County, Georgia, representing to Congress, as a great grievance, that Mr. Adams had been placed at the head of the committee on foreign relations, and praying his removal. They also expressed their opinion, in respectful language, that he was suffering under monomania on every subject in which a dark skin was involved. The memorial was sent to Mr. Adams himself.

Mr. Adams wished it read, as it was couched in very respectful language, and claimed the *right*, as a privilege, to be heard in his own defense. The reception was objected to, and a scene of confusion ensued. It was pretty clear that the purported proceedings were a hoax,—that no such meeting had been held. The whole day was spent in altercation, Mr. Adams claiming the *privilege*, and being determined to address the House in self-defense, and his opponents as resolved he should not. The House adjourned amid this confusion, and of

course the unfinished business came up the next morning, Mr. Adams finally obtaining leave to defend himself; but in doing so he was more aggressive than defensive, and only increased the already highly-irritated feelings of his antagonists.

In the course of his remarks he mentioned a striking and significant fact, namely, that the United States was the only nation that had refused to recognize the independence of Hayti; all the European nations, including *France*, from whom she had rebelled, had recognized it.

Lord Morpeth, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, who was then in this country, occupied, by courtesy, during this memorable conflict, a seat on the floor of the House, next to that of Mr. Adams, for whom he entertained a profound respect.

Another petition presented by Mr. Adams was one from Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying for a dissolution of the Union, which he moved to refer to a select committee with instructions to report adversely to the prayer of the petition. Mr. Wise raised the question of reception; but Mr. Gilmer moved a resolution which had precedence,—that the member from Massachusetts be censured by the House for offering such a paper. The House was at once in the greatest commotion. Point after point of order was raised, and motion upon motion made; but Mr. Gilmer was declared to be in order.

Meantime, a caucus of Southern members was held, at which certain proceedings to take place in the House the next day were agreed upon.

On the meeting of the House the next morning, after some other business was disposed of, the Speaker announced the first business to be the motion to lay the resolution of Mr. Gilmer, to censure Mr. Adams, on the table. On this the ayes and noes were taken, and resulted, ayes 94, noes 112,—so it was not laid on the table.

Mr. Marshall then rose (according to arrangement in caucus), and asked Mr. Gilmer to accept for his resolution a substitute, which, that the gentleman from Virginia might know what it was, he would read in his place. He then read a preamble setting forth the fact of Mr. Adams having offered such a petition,—that it struck at the very existence of the government

and Constitution they had sworn to support,—that such an act was in itself high treason, etc. The resolutions then followed, in substance that Mr. Adams deserved, and should receive, the censure of this House for what he had done.

Mr. Marshall said he knew full well the responsibility he incurred by offering his preamble and resolutions; but he had weighed the consequences. He disclaimed all personal hostility to Mr. Adams. His whole course towards that distinguished man proved that he could be actuated by no unkind feeling towards him. The name of that gentleman, and the name of his family, had been connected with his name and the name of his family in days long gone. He had supported him when he first came upon the stage of action for the Presidency; he had supported and defended his administration; he had ever respected him. He commented upon the value of the Union, as the bond which bound us together and made us a great and a powerful nation; without it we should be broken into fragments. He looked upon the proposition even to discuss this subject with horror. It was stupefying. This proposition had come, too, from Massachusetts! that cradle of liberty! He spoke very eloquently for about twenty minutes, the House, in the mean time, being silent as death, and anxiety and concern being depicted upon every countenance.

The substitute was of course accepted, and Mr. Marshall moved its adoption by the House.

When Mr. Marshall sat down, no one rose, and the House continued for about a minute perfectly silent. The Chair then said, "If the gentleman from Massachusetts wishes to say anything, he will be heard."

Mr. Adams rose, and the members gathered round and near him, anxious to catch every word he should utter. He did not know that he had anything to say at this time,—not much, at least. He wished to know the disposition of the House; when it called upon him to defend himself he should do so.

Mr. Adams spoke of the grievances which his constituents and the people of the free States generally complained of, and which he would show when the time comes for him to make his defense. He replied to Mr. Marshall: that gentleman had

disclaimed all personal hostility to him, and yet he had poured out the phials of his wrath upon his head; he had denounced him as guilty of TREASON. "Why, sir," said Mr. Adams, "does the gentleman think his puny intellect can make treason? Sir, the Constitution has defined what treason is."

Mr. Adams spoke of the feeling at the North, and of the oppressions of this government: these were oppressions which the gentleman himself had been chiefly instrumental in imposing upon them; and if there is no actual remedy for these and others, the people at the North would DISSOLVE THE UNION. He called aloud for the reading of the two or three first paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence. The Clerk was some time in finding the volume, and Mr. Adams continued to call several times to him to "read the first paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence,"—"Read them, sir, and let the House listen." The Clerk read, and as he came to a passage which Mr. Adams thought applied, he exclaimed, "Read that again," "There, sir, read THAT again." The reading concluded, Mr. Adams went on and showed that the people have a RIGHT if oppressed—if the objects for which government is established are not realized—to change or abolish their government, and they WOULD do it. If the rule which excluded people from the North from coming here with their petitions were continued,—if, when they come here with them, they were continued to be thrown back in their faces,—they would resist; they would dissever the Union.

Being about to close, Mr. Cooper, of Pennsylvania, rose and said he wished to intimate to Mr. Adams that it was intended that the vote now about to be taken should be the final action on the subject, and would, if decided in the affirmative, be the censure intended. He wished his friend to understand that this would be the only opportunity, perhaps, he would have of making his defense.

Mr. Adams said if the House so determined, be it so, he must submit; but it was an unheard-of procedure thus to act, to call upon a man without notice to defend himself against such serious charges.

Mr. Wise now, in a most solemn and lugubrious manner, said

he wished the House to listen to a voice from the tomb. He sent to the Clerk's table Washington's Farewell Address to be read, and as the Clerk came to certain passages, he exclaimed, as Mr. Adams had done before, "Read that again, sir," "Read that again." The imitation was too palpable not to be observed, and produced a ludicrous rather than a serious effect. The reading being closed, Mr. Wise commenced a speech in which he indulged in a tirade of the most acrimonious and insulting language towards Mr. Adams, charging him with treading on the graves of the old English party and of his father, and with being a vampire, etc.; asserting that both father and son were prostrated by the Democracy; that this same English party now existed and was in alliance with England against the South. Without concluding his bitter and rambling harangue, Mr. Wise had exhausted himself, and asked an adjournment of the House, which was granted.

On the next day Mr. Wise resumed, and proceeded for two hours and a half in a strain similar to that in which he indulged the day before: the burden of his remarks being an English party in the country; the Abolitionists; the arrogance and insolence of England; her wish to separate the Union; her naval power and her ambition; the Northern Democracy; Southern slaves; *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, including Mr. Adams, of whom he never lost sight, and who was the wind-mill Mr. Wise took for an English party.

Mr. Wise having concluded, Mr. Adams claimed, and finally obtained, the floor, upon a point of order; namely, that the House could not entertain these resolutions, inasmuch as they charged him [Mr. Adams] with two high crimes,—to wit, subornation of perjury, and high treason, which this House could not try.

As he proceeded, he alluded to the case of Mr. Wise and the Cilley duel, and the most profound silence reigned in the House. "Four years ago," said Mr. Adams, "there came into the House a man whose hands were dripping with the blood of a fellow-member. He had desired to be excused from voting on this case because I had then been instrumental in saving him from expulsion. I then did express my opinion against the right of

the House to proceed in that manner, and it is likely that I saved that blood-stained man from being expelled."

The House was thrilled by this terrible attack. Mr. Adams uttered this sentence, dwelling with emphasis upon "dripping" and "blood," with powerful dramatic effect, and it produced a corresponding sensation in the House.

Mr. Adams turned upon Mr. Marshall, and spoke of the spirit which the preamble and resolutions breathed towards him. Mr. Marshall had alluded to the intercourse which had existed between his uncle [Chief-Justice Marshall] and his [Mr. Adams's] father. If he had thought of that when he penned them, he should have supposed they would not have breathed so much vindictiveness.

He said it was impossible that he could have an impartial jury in that House; he wished to know if the slaveholders in that House were impartial jurors in the case? No: they had a sordid personal interest in the affair, and could not be impartial.

But he was to be treated with *mercy!* He disdained and cast away their grace and mercy; he *defied* them; he had constituents to go to; expel him from the House, and it would not be long before they would see him again.

After Mr. Adams had concluded, Mr. Fillmore moved to lay the whole subject on the table. This motion was negatived, ayes 90, noes 100,—the Southern members generally, and the Northern Democrats, voting in the negative.

The day being spent, the House adjourned.

On the succeeding day, the subject coming up, the House came to a vote upon Mr. Adams's question of jurisdiction, upon which the vote stood—in favor of its jurisdiction, 118; against it, 75. So the subject was still before that body. The House was now more calm and disposed to listen to sober discussion. Mr. Underwood, of Kentucky, a Whig, and a cool, dispassionate, fair man, addressed it in a very sensible, judicious, feeling speech on the subject of slavery. He condemned the twenty-first rule, which excluded petitions from being read, and thought it had been the prolific source of the disorder and bad feeling that had long reigned in that body. He gave the members from the slaveholding States a solemn warning that the course

they were pursuing might bring about a dissolution of the Union. "And let me tell gentlemen," said Mr. Underwood, "that A DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION IS A DISSOLUTION OF SLAVERY." This was *prophecy*, now fulfilled.

Mr. Botts, of Virginia, and Mr. Arnold, of Tennessee, both Whigs, spoke with equal boldness and candor. Mr. Botts passed a high eulogium upon the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts,—spoke of the manner in which he had been irritated and chafed in that body by others, and asked what the offense was that he had committed. He had presented a petition, and had asked to have it referred to a select committee, of which he, of course, would be the chairman, which should report *adverse* to the prayer, and set forth in shining light, and with all the ability and wisdom of that gentleman, the evils that would follow should the prayer of the petitioners be granted.

But, Mr. Botts said, the question of dissolution of the Union did not sound now for the first time in his ears. He then charged the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Upshur, with being an open and undisguised advocate of the immediate dissolution of the Union, which Mr. Wise denied.

Mr. Saltonstall, Whig, of Massachusetts, followed in an animated speech in defense of Mr. Adams, and the day closed, the subject being still undisposed of.

Mr. Marshall took the floor the next morning—the House having refused to lay the subject on the table—in support of his preamble and resolutions, and, in reply to Mr. Wise, defended the Federal party against his charge that they were an English party: he entered his solemn and unqualified denial that the Northern men, or that the Federal party, ever were traitors to their country, or a banded faction conspiring to bring us back under those very chains which they themselves had cut asunder! He spoke of General Hamilton, whom he eulogized as one of the ablest and most patriotic men among all that splendid galaxy which the Revolution made conspicuous. Mr. Marshall said Mr. Wise's five-hour speech might be summed up in four resolutions or propositions; thus:

"1. The existence of slavery as an institution is essential to the preservation of liberty and equality.

"2. There has been from the foundation of the government an English party, led and headed by the House of Braintree; its object being to bring this country back under the dominion of England.

"3. That this faction was once crushed by a slaveholder (Mr. Jefferson), that it was again crushed by another slaveholder (General Jackson), was now appearing again, headed by the gentleman from Massachusetts, but would be again crushed if the whole South would but unite with the *Democracy* of the North to resist this attack on liberty and equality, under the lead of another slaveholder, John Tyler.

"4. That one of the schemes of this English party to destroy this confederacy is to establish a tariff by which the English commerce shall be curtailed, a rival raised up to her in the North, her manufacturing industry palsied, and the North put in her place as the great manufacturer for the world; for all which England is to aid in dissolving the Union."

This *reductio ad absurdum* created a roar of laughter, in which Mr. Wise himself heartily joined. The question recurring on the adoption of Mr. Marshall's preamble and resolutions, Mr. Adams rose and addressed the House:

"I have heard it said by a person acquainted with Warren Hastings that when he was brought before the judicial tribunal of his country (the House of Lords) for the commission of high crimes,—the trial of whom lasted eleven years,—when the thunders of the eloquence of Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan were poured upon his head, he declared that he almost thought he was guilty of the crimes charged upon him, so powerful was the eloquence with which the charges had been made and commented on. The eloquence with which the gentleman from Kentucky had now assailed him, under the profession of having no personal feeling, was equal to that of Burke and Sheridan combined. But he (Mr. Adams) could assure the gentleman and the House that not for a single instant had the idea been impressed upon his mind that he was guilty of any part of the charges brought against him. Not for one moment had he been driven from that sense of conscious innocence with which he met the charge, coming,

as it did, from the most extraordinary combination of parties that had ever been formed in this House, being the exclusive Tyler men, or Corporal's Guard, headed and led on by His Excellency, Ex-Governor Gilmer. Then there were the Georgia Whigs; then some Virginia Whigs who were not Tylerites; and then the *Democracy* of the North, the auxiliaries of "the peculiar institution." But the leaders themselves could not agree: the commander-in-chief from *Accomac*, and the admiral of the squadron from Kentucky, were as wide apart as the poles.

Mr. Adams presently turned upon Mr. Rhett, and noticed the preamble and resolutions he had prepared and intended to offer, declaring the necessity of dissolving the Union, and thought it very strange that he should now vote Mr. Adams guilty of treason and subornation of perjury for having presented a petition exactly agreeing with his own views. This raised a hearty laugh at Mr. Rhett's expense.

Mr. Adams continued his remarks; but before he had concluded, the House adjourned.

A week had been consumed in an attempt to censure and expel Mr. Adams,—a week of the most intense excitement and confusion. Sunday now intervened, a day of rest and reflection.

The death and funeral of Senator Nathan Dixon, of Rhode Island, intervening, postponed the further action of the House on the question of privilege for two or three days. When the subject was resumed, Mr. Gilmer, one of the Tyler "corporal's guard," addressed the House for two hours in support of the proposition.

The latter then rose and spoke in his defense. As God was his judge, he said, he had rather a man would stab him in his seat than present such a proposition as the gentleman from Kentucky and the gentleman from Virginia had made, invoking the censure of the House upon the most conscientious of the acts he had ever performed here. Among the greatest causes of the pain he felt was that the name of MARSHALL should be connected with such a proceeding as this; a *name* which, up to the *present* time, had been unsullied and synonymous with pre-eminent abilities, and all that could dignify and adorn man. He then turned upon the present possessor of that name, who,

if he has forgotten the terrible, the unmerciful, the excoriating castigation he then received, is more callous than most men. Certainly he remembered it for years afterwards, and spoke of the part he had acted—drawn in by others—with extreme regret, declaring, in his emphatic language, that "he suffered under that castigation little less than the torments of the damned."

Mr. Gilmer's turn came next; and well might he tremble, after the excruciating torture his friend and co-laborer in this miserable plot had just undergone in his presence; and before Mr. Adams let him go from his hands, he had abundant reason to know he had not trembled without reason. Nor did the gentleman from Acco*mac*, as Mr. Adams always designated him, escape.

Mr. Adams then adverted to the fact that all these charges, accusations, and invectives against him came from Virginia; for Mr. Marshall also was a Virginian by birth or descent. This led him to speak of Virginia, of the feelings he had ever entertained for that State, and the obligations he had been under to her most distinguished men; those men that had made her distinguished, from Washington down to Mr. Monroe. In enumerating these, he was necessarily led into a review of his whole public life, from the time he was first appointed a foreign minister, at the age of twenty-seven, by Washington, down to the close of Mr. Monroe's administration, when he was elected President to succeed him. This elicited the deepest attention from members who had gathered around the "old man eloquent" at the commencement of his remarks. It was history,—history of the most interesting character, unwritten history, or memoirs, never before heard, and never again to be heard till it shall appear in "The Life and Times of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, written by J. Q. Adams." I could not but think, while Mr. Adams was delivering his plain, modest, interesting narrative before that audience, of Herodotus, the Father of History, reciting his writings before assembled and enchanted crowds of Greeks. His, however, were written,—this was oral and extempore. The whole scene was impressive.

"Conticuere omnes ora tenebant."

Every eye was intent upon the time-honored speaker, in the hall and in the crowded galleries; all hung upon his words, and drank them in as the words of a sage and philosopher about to descend to the tomb. Mr. Adams simply gave a plain, unostentatious recital of the principal events of his public life, the part he had acted under Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, together with the lofty character he gave *these* Virginians of the *olden time*. Little did his assailants know who John Quincy Adams was till they waked him up. They had for ten years been accustomed to see before them—always in his place—an old and infirm man, tottering with age and trembling with palsy, whom they looked upon as a monomaniac, or in his dotage. Of his former history, or of the eminent services he had rendered his country in the highest stations at home and abroad, they probably knew little. Was such a man to be feared? But in this palsied old man, bent with age and tottering under bodily infirmities, they aroused a GIANT, in whose grasp they were but as children, and before whose terrible power they cowed and trembled.

Mr. Adams stated one historical fact of great importance, which was before unknown; namely, that while minister at the Russian court, which was, at the time he went there, under the control of Napoleon, whose minister at that court, Caulaincourt, was nearly as powerful as Alexander himself, twenty-five American vessels with valuable cargoes were sequestered by French influence, and that he succeeded in getting the sequestration removed and the vessels released, while not another ambassador there dared to oppose the French minister or French influence, and that the release of these twenty-five American vessels was one of the causes which led to the invasion of Russia by Napoleon, and consequently to his downfall.

Mr. Adams took occasion, in the course of his remarks, to read a pamphlet against slavery. These, he said, were glowing words: the writer had called the institution "the plague-spot of the country," and in the most glowing language depicted its evils, and contrasted the free State of New York with the slave State of Virginia. Mr. Adams asked who it was supposed was the writer of this able production, which did

honor to the head and heart of the author. Could it possibly be one who was now in conspiracy with others to destroy him and had assailed him with the fury of a tiger? Could it be one who was anxious by his labors now to *atone* for the *offense* he had committed by writing this pamphlet? Was the gentleman now desirous to cover this "plague-spot"?

The pamphlet was written by Mr. Marshall.

Mr. Marshall, being out when Mr. Adams read from his pamphlet, made some inquiries of Mr. Adams what it was he had been reading.

Mr. Adams said, "From the pamphlet you gave me the other day; I suppose IT was not CONFIDENTIAL?"

"No," Mr. Marshall said, "he knew his man."

Mr. Adams.—"I don't know what he means by saying 'He knows his man.'"

Mr. Marshall.—"I knew you were not to be trusted."

Mr. Adams.—"AH, the gentleman is TOUCHED! is he? he makes a personality where I made none. I commended his pamphlet,—its language, 'plague-spot,' and all: it is as true as it is eloquent. The sentiments," said Mr. Adams, "expressed are the sentiments of the patriots of the Revolution,—of Washington, of Jefferson, of Madison, and of Monroe."

Mr. Adams referred to the charge of Mr. Botts against a high functionary of the government, the Secretary of the Navy, of being in favor of a dissolution. "Did *he* deny, as the member from *Accomac* did for him, that he was not in favor of dissolving the Union? Oh, no! his denial was upon *conditions!* and what were they? He preferred 'a dissolution of the Union over the systems of policy which he regarded as fatal to all true liberty.' And so do the signers to the petition I presented, and for the presentation of which I am charged with high treason and subornation of perjury! What were these systems of policy to which the Secretary preferred a dissolution of the Union? The Secretary would sooner see the Union dissolved than witness the establishment of any principles which defeat its true character and defeat its legitimate objects. Its legitimate objects! what are they? Is a protective tariff a legitimate object?" So help him God, *he*

believed it to be one of the legitimate objects of this government. He said the Secretary had evaded the subject,—he had not come out with a prompt categorical negative to the charge of the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Botts. He showed that those who had signed the petition he had presented stood on precisely the same ground that the Secretary of the Navy had taken.

The resolutions of Mr. Rhett, of South Carolina, to which Mr. Adams made allusion, were drawn up to be presented to the House, some years before, when the Southern members retired in a body and held a caucus, the result of which was the adoption of the famous twenty-first rule. These resolutions declared that "the Constitution of the United States having proved inadequate to protect the Southern States in the peaceable enjoyment of their rights and property, it is expedient that the said Constitution should be amended or THE UNION OF THE STATES DISSOLVED;" and "that a committee of two members from each State in the Union be appointed to report upon the expediency and practicability of amending the Constitution, or THE BEST MEANS OF PEACEABLY DISSOLVING THE UNION." And yet Mr. Rhett and his associates were now virtuously indignant at Mr. Adams for offering a petition to dissolve the Union, accompanied by a motion to refer it to a select committee to report *against* the prayer of the petitioners.

But all things must have an end, and so had this question involving the right of petition, the whole subject being laid on the table.

Upon announcing the vote to lay the whole subject on the table,—ayes 144, noes 52,—the Speaker said the further reception of petitions was in order, whereupon Mr. Adams, having had the floor to present petitions when this *émeute* of a fortnight's duration began, proceeded to offer the one hundred and one petitions he then (two weeks previous) held in his hand. The circumstance created much merriment in the House,—Mr. Adams offering his petitions as demurely as if nothing had occurred.

The Adams affair was followed next morning by an episode which put the House in excellent humor. Upon the opening of the House, Mr. Gilmer rose and desired permission to present

a paper, upon which he wished the action of that body. From his very solemn manner, something very grave and serious was apprehended. Leave being given, he sent the paper to the Clerk, who read it in a clear, sonorous voice. It was signed by Mr. Gilmer, Mr. Rhett, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Proffit, asking to be excused from further service on the committee of foreign relations, alleging that after the course taken by Mr. Adams and the action of the House, they could no longer serve on the committee with him. Upon the question being put whether the gentlemen should be excused, there was a tremendous response of AY! The negative being called for, a single *no* was faintly uttered, followed by a most hearty and very general laugh, from the fact that the gentlemen had kicked themselves, when they had expected to kick Mr. Adams, out of the committee. Quite a difference; and their surprised and disappointed looks only made the laugh the more hearty. On the whole, they found "the old man an ugly customer."

And so did ex-governor "Extra Billy Smith," of Virginia, as he was and is still called. During the *mêlée*, this gentleman made some insidious proposition. Mr. Adams inquired its intent. "I made it for *your* benefit," replied Mr. Smith. Upon which Mr. Adams instantly exclaimed, "*Non* TALI *auxilio defensoribus istis.*" This produced a laugh among those who understood Latin. But Mr. Smith, who understood it about as perfectly as he did Choctaw, stood "dumfounded," not knowing what the Latin meant, nor, of course, how the laugh came in, but feeling that he was the butt. His comical and perplexed look only increased the fun, in which members freely indulged.

I have said that Mr. Adams had great dramatic power; he could give terrible effect to a single word by his manner of uttering it. In the above Latin quotation he dwelt upon and gave great emphasis to the word *tali*. And in his conflict with Mr. Gilmer, charging him with tampering with his colleague, Mr. Cushing, to have him, Mr. Adams, removed from the chairmanship of the committee on foreign relations, in uttering the word "tampering," he gave a tremendous emphasis to the first syllable, dwelling on it thus: "the gentleman from Vir-

ginia has been T-A-MPERING with my colleague,"—repeating the word with the same emphasis many times in the course of his remarks, until he had "created a raw," as horsemen say.

This power of *driving* a word, as it were, into his antagonist, his apt use of pungent classical quotations, and his unbounded knowledge, made him formidable. In such conflicts as I have just described, he had no equal: he reveled in a storm, and, however provoked, excited, or irascible he might be, he never lost his self-possession. In this two weeks' hand-to-hand battle with his fierce and eloquent assailants, they found him more than the equal of their united strength.* He was their unscathed victor, and when they had prudently retired, discomfited, and the House had laid the subject on the table, he resumed the presentation of the petitions he had in hand when assailed with as much composure as if nothing had occurred,—the whole affair seeming to have been but a parenthesis in the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Adams was, indeed, a wonderful man,—wonderful for his mental and physical vigor at the age of seventy-five to eighty, and wonderful for a memory which was a storehouse of knowledge, from which nothing once stored there was ever lost or mislaid, so that whenever needed it was at hand.

TOM MARSHALL.

Mr. Marshall was a brilliant speaker, a man of fine talents, and highly cultivated; but he was erratic, and lacked solidity of judgment, steadiness of purpose, and self-control. He had, moreover, a very large share of self-appreciation, and was exceedingly vain of his abilities; at one time an eloquent temperance advocate, at another the victim of intemperance.

* And yet Mr. Adams, when he was a member of the Senate of the United States at the age of forty, complained, as appears by an entry in his journal, that "his defects of elocution were incurable;" that "the process of reasoning in his mind was too slow for uninterrupted articulation;" that "his thoughts arose at first confused, and required time to shape them into a succession of sentences; that the chain of his argument often escaped him." "But sometimes," he says, "in the ardor of debate, when my feelings are wound up to a high tone, elocution pours itself along with unusual rapidity, and I have passages which would not shame a good speaker." The defects of which he speaks had now all been overcome.

Vanity undoubtedly induced him to join in the assault upon Mr. Adams, and he was elated with the thought of grappling personally with the Boanerges of the House. He was well paid for his arrogance and presumption. In after-years he had the magnanimity to express, before a large audience, great regret in regard to the part he had taken in that combined assault upon Mr. Adams, whom he eulogized in eloquent terms, when, so far as Mr. Adams was concerned, his eulogistic words fell upon "the dull, cold ear of death." But in doing this he acted upon the generous impulses of his own excellent heart, and did *himself* tardy justice.

Mr. Adams had no equal in the House in controversial debate. The men who had now assailed him, and had for so long a period kept up their fierce and vindictive assaults, determined to drive him out of the House, though of most unquestioned ability, were as pigmies in his hands, and they were soon made to feel that discretion would have been the better part of valor, had they exercised it in letting "the old man eloquent" alone. No man ever gained any advantage of him in a conflict of this kind. He had, on a former occasion, in a fit of ill humor made a mistake in assailing Mr. Webster, on which occasion he was severely handled by Mr. Hardin, Mr. Read, his colleague, and Mr. Evans; but to neither of these gentlemen did he reply, conscious probably that he was justly rebuked by his friends. His resources in debate were apparently unlimited, and his language at times most scathing and withering.

LORD MORPETH.—MR. DICKENS.

I have or should have mentioned that Lord Morpeth, afterwards Earl of Carlisle, was spending the winter in Washington, and was a frequent visitor to the House of Representatives, and of course a listener to the debates and a witness of the stormy scenes. Having been invited to occupy a seat within the bar of the House, he usually sat near Mr. Adams, for whom he appeared to have a great admiration.

He was unassuming in his deportment, and had little of the "John Bull" in his appearance. Not so another Englishman, who now made his appearance and attracted great attention.

This was no other than "Boz," or Dickens, whose coming had been for some time heralded with a great blare of trumpets. Mr. Dickens was accompanied by his wife, and took lodgings at the house now known as Willard's Hotel.

A few evenings after his arrival, he, with his wife, attended the President's levee. When they entered, all eyes were turned to them, or him. Having paid their respects to the President and his lady, they proceeded to the East Room, followed by a rushing crowd, which surged after them, as if he were some Hindoo Maharajah, covered with diamonds, pearls, and rubies. Mr. Dickens moved around the great room fully conscious of the sensation he was making, and with an air which, had he been the great officer mentioned, would have well fitted the character.

While Mr. Dickens was thus promenading the East Room, Lord Morpeth was quietly standing near the fire, looking on unnoticed, with his chapeau under his arm, presenting a striking contrast in dress and deportment to his countryman,—the one the personification of simplicity in dress and manners, the other manifesting a consciousness that he was the observed of all observers.

On Mr. Dickens's return to England, it will be remembered, he paid the Americans for their great attentions to him by writing "American Notes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit."

IMPORTANT BUSINESS DEMANDING THE ACTION OF CONGRESS.

There was a large amount of important business to be disposed of by Congress at this session. The treasury was empty, —a loan bill to supply it temporarily was before the House, and in connection with this a proposition to repeal or suspend the Distribution act. The term of the Compromise act of 1833 expired during this session; the duties imposed by that act had run down, by its terms, to twenty per cent. during the last year, which did not supply a revenue adequate to the demands of the treasury. The country was consequently in debt, and our credit at home and abroad at a very low ebb. No loan could be negotiated until a tariff bill should be passed and moneyed men could see that an adequate revenue was to be raised.

The subject of the tariff was therefore the most important, as it was the most perplexing one before the House. The same subject was undergoing a very thorough discussion in the Senate on Mr. Clay's resolutions, by the mover himself, Mr. Evans, of Maine, Mr. Simmons, of Rhode Island, Mr. Huntington, of Connecticut, and others.

But there was at this time a most singular state of things in the House. There were "the peculiar friends" of Mr. Tyler,—the "corporal's guard," who were, singularly enough, in opposition to the majority of the House, who were doing all in their power to pass a loan bill, a tariff bill, and other measures for the relief and support of the government, and yet were thwarted and their efforts counteracted daily by the administration and these "peculiar friends."

The Loan bill being under consideration in committee of the whole, Mr. Wise offered an amendment requiring the Secretary of the Treasury, whenever the stock to be created by this loan should be below par, to go into the market and buy it up! With what? There was not a dollar in the treasury. A WISE proposition, truly!

MR. CLAY TAKES LEAVE OF THE SENATE.

It being known that Mr. Clay was to take final leave (as he then supposed) of the Senate, the galleries were, as usual, crowded at an early hour. At one o'clock he rose and addressed the Senate. The scene was impressive. Every Senator save Mr. Woodbury laid aside all business and listened. He spoke of the long period he had been in public life, and alluded, modestly, to his public services. Such as they were, it was not for him to speak of them; he left them to be judged of by those who should come after him, and history, if history should deign to notice anything he had done. But of his private motives he had a right to speak; these could only be known to himself and the Great Searcher of all hearts, and he most solemnly averred that whatever he had done had been done with a single eye and a single heart for the good of the country.

He alluded with much feeling and dignity to his having been

for years the object of misrepresentation and calumny, which he had borne with unshaken confidence that his fellow-citizens would eventually do him justice. But if he had malignant enemies, he had warm and devoted friends in every part of this broad land. He spoke of his having emigrated to Kentucky, an orphan, poor and penniless,—without the favor of the great—with an imperfect education—and with no father to look to for counsel and assistance. Such as he was, penniless, obscure, and unknown, his adopted State at once embraced and caressed him like a native child. From that day to this her choicest honors had been showered upon him.

After speaking of his long, pleasant associations in Congress and in public life, some of his early associates being still present, Mr. Adams, Mr. Calhoun, and Mr. Webster, he closed with an affecting farewell to the Senate and to the Senators, one and all, on whom he invoked the blessings of Heaven, and whose labors he ardently hoped would be such that when they retired to the quiet of private life, as he was now about to do, they might receive from their constituents and the whole country that most valuable of all earthly benedictions, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Having closed by offering the credentials of his successor, and moving that he be now sworn as a Senator, Mr. Clay retired.

As soon as Mr. Crittenden was sworn in, Mr. Preston moved an adjournment, saying that from the deep sensation which had been sympathetically manifested, there could be little inclination to go on with business, and that he could not help participating in the feeling which he was sure universally prevailed. The adjournment was carried.

Members of the Senate, all save one, then gathered around the retiring Senator, and took leave individually of him,—all, save Mr. Woodbury, who was not to be moved by such a scene.

As Mr. Clay became somewhat free from the crowd of friends, he noticed Mr. Calhoun standing at a little distance: they met and embraced in silence.

The two distinguished statesmen had held no social intercourse with each other for nearly five years; yet as they were about to be separated the past rushed to their memory, and the

real admiration they entertained for each other overrode every less noble feeling. They had almost spent their lives together in Congress, and at various times stood side by side, animated by patriotism and emulous only of serving the country. Time had passed over both, and the young had become old. Few of their early associates remained. One was about to retire, and both must ere long "sleep the sleep that knows no waking." The retirement of the one would leave the other with no companion or rival of his younger days, and it told him emphatically that he too must soon follow. Thoughts like these soften the heart not wholly indurated, and cause the fountain of generous feeling to gush forth; it came, and the two eminent rivals, under the influence of these sympathies, were drawn together. Well would it have been for the country that they had never been separated.

MR. CLAY DEFENDS HIMSELF AND DEFIES HIS ENEMIES.

Mr. Clay spent the winter of 1842–43 in New Orleans, and on returning home in the spring of 1843 found that some of his old enemies—the wealthy family of Wickliffes among others—had been busy in endeavoring to defame him. They had joined Tyler, and of course were more than ever hostile to Mr. Clay. The Hon. Tom Marshall too, representing the Ashland district, feeling the restraint of Mr. Clay's presence while the latter was at Washington, became morose and inimical to him, and compromised himself with Tylerism. He returned from Washington dissatisfied with himself, and consequently bitter towards everybody, and in this mood traversed the district making speeches which, though not openly hostile to the great statesman, whom he feared, were filled with ill-concealed but malicious innuendo.

Finding, on his return home, that his enemies had taken advantage of his absence to defame him, Mr. Clay posted a notice on the court-house door, that he would address his fellow-citizens of Fayette County on the first day of the ensuing court. This was enough to create a lively interest throughout the county, and to call together a large assemblage on the court-house green on the day mentioned.

Mr. Clay appeared, and was greeted by the multitude with enthusiastic cheers. He mounted the rostrum and stood for a moment surveying the crowd before him. Again loud and hearty cheers went forth, and he knew that he still had a strong hold on the affections of the people of Kentucky. He then proceeded to address the multitude in one of his most stirring efforts. His voice had the old ring that had so often, and for many years, moved the hearts of "the hunters of Kentucky," whose hearts he so well knew how to reach. He spoke for nearly two hours; but unfortunately there was no stenographic reporter present, and fragments of the speech only appeared in the papers. The following was the closing passage, as reported by one who was present:

"It is now more than forty years since I came here, a poor and friendless youth. I was taken by the hand by your fathers, and led to fame and fortune. All that I am and have been I owe to their generous kindness and steady confidence. And now I have come to spend the evening of my days among their children. I feel like the stag who has been long hunted, and who returns at last to die on the spot whence he started in vigor and hope. The curs of party have been long barking at my heels, and the bloodhounds of personal malignity are springing at my throat, but" (rising to his full height, and looking round with flashing eyes on his defamers who had mingled with the crowd of hearers) "I SCORN AND DEFY THEM NOW, AS I EVER DID!"

In giving me an account of this speech and the attending circumstances, General Leslie Coombs—God bless him! may his shadow never be less; he has outlived all his cotemporaries, and is still young!—said, in the most enthusiastic manner, "When Mr. Clay thundered forth these words he raised himself to his utmost height, and his flashing eye looked defiance to all within its reach. He was at that moment just eleven feet and a half high. I measured him accurately with my eye."

Mr. Marshall had given out that he should reply to "Prince Hal;" consequently sport was expected, and the crowd waited for twenty minutes or more after Mr. Clay left, expecting the appearance of Marshall, and clamorously calling for him; but

no Tom Marshall appeared, and so they dispersed. But where was the bold antagonist who was to have entered the field against the gallant "Harry of the West"? He had secured a seat at the window of a neighboring house, where he could see and hear Mr. Clay without being seen. But, stirred by one of Mr. Clay's indignant outbursts, he unconsciously leaned forward so far as to bring himself to the speaker's view, when a shot from the latter, of scorn and derision, sent him instantly under cover.

"And so," said Mr. Marshall next day to a friend of Mr. Clay, "you think Old Hal made a great speech yesterday?" "Yes," was the reply; "did not you?" "Not half as great," replied Marshall, "as you would have heard if I had replied to him; for if I had, the old lion would have been aroused, and such a speech he would have poured out as only he can make when thoroughly stirred up by opposition. I should have made a rousing speech, but it would only have brought down upon myself a more overwhelming blast."

"But why didn't you reply to him?" "Because I was a coward; I did not dare attack the roused lion, and I thought prudence, in this case, the better part of valor; and I reckon it was. But I shall take care how I 'beard the lion in his lair' hereafter."

LORD ASHBURTON ARRIVES.

Difficulties and irritating questions had been for some years arising and increasing in intensity between this country and Great Britain, until they had become so serious as to endanger our peaceful relations. These questions, or matters of misunderstanding, were, first, the northeast boundary question; second, the right of search; third, the Caroline affair; fourth, the Creole case; and fifth, the Oregon boundary question. Some of these had long been subjects of irritating correspondence.

Mr. Fox was British minister here, but it was deemed necessary by the British government to send a special ambassador and minister extraordinary to settle these points of difference, and endeavor to bring about harmony and a good understanding between the two governments. With this view Lord Ashburton, who, being the son of an American lady,—Miss

Bingham, of Philadelphia, who married Mr. Baring, of London, —was selected to come to the United States on this mission of peace, and was brought over in the ship of war "Warspite." A more judicious selection, or one more acceptable to the people of this country, could not have been made. Happily, his mission proved fortunate for both countries, resulting in the Washington Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. This mission bore something of the character of the late "High Joint," and was equally successful in its results.

Mr. Webster and Lord Ashburton went to work like two men of business and common sense: there was little diplomacy between them, but plain, sensible talk, and a real desire to effect a good understanding, and it was done.

We gave up a portion of the territory on our northeastern boundary, which the treaty of 1783 unquestionably gave us, and to which England had not a shadow of right; but we obtained equivalents, and averted a war. The right of search, which had been the cause of the War of 1812, but which was not settled by the treaty of Ghent, was now given up by England. The treaty did not settle the Oregon boundary, nor was there anything in it relating to "the Caroline" affair or "the Creole" question.

UNWRITTEN HISTORY, BY MR. ADAMS.

There arose in the House, a few days after the arrival of Lord Ashburton, a debate in which Mr. Wise, Mr. C. J. Ingersoll, and Mr. Adams were the principal participants, during which the latter, "the old man eloquent," again became the interesting instructor of the House. The speeches of Mr. Wise and Mr. Ingersoll were of no importance, except that, like the bucket of water poured into a dry pump, they served the purpose of drawing from a hidden fountain the pure and sparkling streams of historic lore.

Mr. Wise made one of his wild, rambling, extravagant war speeches, which, but for the relation in which he stood to Mr. Tyler and the cabinet, would have passed as the idle wind, but, being considered as indicative of the feeling at the Executive mansion, it was looked upon as an attempt to excite a war feeling among the people.

Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll followed next day with what Mr. Adams wittily and aptly termed "a *pacific* war speech." In the course of his remarks Mr. Ingersoll said that in case of a war with England—and he did not think war such an evil as most people did—the British might burn New York, but then it would be easy for us to burn London.

Mr. Adams replied chiefly to this speech, but incidentally to Mr. Wise, torturing and scorching Mr. Ingersoll by scathing irony and ridicule. He said that Mr. Ingersoll had spoken with cold indifference of the burning of New York, which he seemed to admit would be a very probable thing in case of a war; he was quite reconciled to this event by the supposition that if New York was burned we could burn London, a city four or five times as large, and thereby settle the account with a large balance in our favor. "Sir," said Mr. Adams, "if there is a man in this House who heard the gentleman from Pennsylvania speaking of burning cities, in the manner he did, without a feeling of indignation and shame, I want no intercourse with him."

Mr. Adams said he attributed some importance to the remarks of the gentleman from Pennsylvania in connection with the speech from the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wise; but he hoped (*ironically*) Lord Ashburton would not; that he would consider them made for a little display in this House, for home consumption, and that he would not go home in consequence of them, but go on with his negotiations with this government, just as if they had never been made.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Adams gave a very interesting history of the negotiation between this government and Great Britain, in regard to a mutual concession of search, which took place in 1818–19–20. Before he left England to assume the duties of Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe, Mr. Wilberforce, he said, sought an interview with him, his object being to inquire whether this government would be willing to enter into an arrangement for a mutual right of search on the coast of Africa, for the purpose of putting a stop to the slave-trade. Mr. Adams told him that such had been the manner in which the government of England had exercised that right, which they

had claimed and we had denied, that he did not think his countrymen would ever agree to any such arrangement; but if they chose they could make the proposition. The proposition was afterwards made while he was Secretary of State. He opposed it vigorously, and almost *alone*, in Mr. Monroe's cabinet, —the members of the cabinet who were slaveholders, and Mr. Monroe himself, favoring it. Both Houses of Congress, too, favored it, and passed resolutions recommending the President to enter into the negotiation. He had a conversation with Mr. C. F. Mercer on this subject, and so widely did they differ that they had warm words about it; and another member from Virginia, General Alexander Smyth, afterwards, in a letter to his constituents, used as an argument against his election to the Presidency the fact that he was opposed to abolishing the slave-trade! He wanted to state the conversation he (Mr. Adams) had had with General Mercer, but General Mercer positively forbade him to do so, as it was a private conversation. The resolutions recommending the President to enter into the negotiation for the mutual right of search passed this House with but NINE negative votes! Such was the feeling *then* on this right of search among slaveholders,—a right about which we hear so much now.

The negotiation was entered upon; as Secretary of State, he was the organ, and the very reluctant organ, of the government in directing our minister, Mr. Rush, to enter upon it. Mr. Rush opened the subject to Mr. George Canning, who at once told him to draw up the convention in his own way, and he would sign it. Mr. Rush did draw it up, and Mr. Canning signed it without dotting an i or crossing a t. It came here, and was submitted to the Senate; in the mean time, a party hostile to Mr. Monroe had sprung up, and there was not the same disposition to support or go with the administration. Some few alterations were made in the treaty by the Senate, and it was sent back to England for ratification; but Mr. Canning took umbrage at the alterations after the treaty had been drawn up by the American minister himself, and would not ratify it as altered, and thus it fell through.

During this recital Mr. Adams was listened to with breath-

less attention, especially by the Southern men, into whose minds new light seemed to break,—many of whom were entirely ignorant that any such negotiation had ever taken place. But that Mr. Adams should then have been so opposed to this search, and the slaveholders in Mr. Monroe's cabinet should have been its advocates, was an entirely new phase of the subject. It will be recollected that Mr. CALHOUN was one of the members of that cabinet.

Mr. Adams was personally severe upon Mr. Ingersoll in reviewing his political zigzag course,—referred to the declaration he had made, that, had he lived during the Revolution, he should have been a *tory;* that, having belonged to the Federal party, he was now one of that "*democracy*" which Clement C. Clay declared were "the natural allies of the South." He also stated, that having written the most ultra protective tariff memorial ever presented to that House, he was now opposed to the protective policy; that having been turned neck and heels out of the District Attorney's office (to which he was appointed by Mr. Adams) by General Jackson, he immediately wheeled about and became an ultra Jackson man! Many other of his *eccentricities* were noticed, all of which the House enjoyed with great zest.

Mr. Adams then proceeded to comment on the speech of Mr. Wise, who was for war with Mexico,—reviewed every cause alleged by him, and showed that not one of them constituted the least cause for war.

Mr. Adams gave an interesting relation of the circumstances of the negotiation between himself as the organ of this government and the Spanish minister, relative to the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Rich in history, and especially that history of which he himself had been the prominent actor, he never opened the fount of reminiscence without pouring therefrom a copious stream of intellectual instruction, which was sought with avidity by all who had the good fortune to be within its reach.

He had been charged with having, as an enemy of the South, surrendered Texas to the Spanish government, and accepted the Sabine, instead of the Rio del Norte, as the boundary be-

tween the two countries. On this occasion he stated what he had asserted on some former occasion, that he, and he *alone*, of all Mr. Monroe's cabinet, had contended to the last for the Rio del Norte as the boundary between this country and Mexico; that he had adhered to that river as the boundary till overruled by Mr. Monroe and *every member of his cabinet;* thus showing that if the yielding this claim was an act of hostility to the South, Southern men, and not himself, had been guilty of the act charged against him as an evidence of his unfriendliness to the South.

Told as they were with all the attending circumstances, and as personal history, these historical reminiscences possessed a charm that riveted every ear, and a value few were so stupid as not to appreciate. When in the communicative mood, Mr. Adams always enchained the House, and members listened with deep interest and unwearied attention.

THE ONE-HOUR RULE.

The "one-hour rule" had not been adopted when this speech of Mr. Adams was made, but was soon after, and has never been repealed or rescinded. In a body so affected with the *cacoethes loquendi* as the House of Representatives, it becomes necessary to assume the power to stop the expenditure of too much wind. John C. Clark, of New York, was the first to propose this rule.

ALMOST A DUEL.

An affair occurred at this time, May 7, which Mr. Reverdy Johnson will have occasion to remember as long as he lives, and which came near resulting in a duel.

A great crowd attended the races, which took place at the race-course situated just back of Columbia College, now in part covered with fine dwellings. As Mr. Stanley and Mr. Wise were coming from the race-course, it unluckily happened that they rode out of the yard in which their horses had been tied nearly abreast of each other. A collision soon occurred, in which Mr. Stanley received a blow, given by Mr. Wise with a cane. It was soon bruited through the city that a duel was to be the result. Mr. Stanley invited Mr. Wise to meet him at

Baltimore, whither he should immediately proceed, with a view to settle the matters between them. Warrants were issued for both, that they might be put under bonds to keep the peace, and not to leave the District for the purpose of fighting a duel.

Mr. Stanley eluded the officer in search of him, and went to Baltimore. Mr. Wise made no attempt to avoid the officer, and was arrested and placed under bonds.

Mr. Stanley was the guest of Mr. Reverdy Johnson for several days, while expecting Mr. Wise, and during this time practiced shooting with a dueling-pistol, in which sport Mr. Johnson joined. The latter fired a ball at the mark, which, hitting it, rebounded and struck his left eye, so injuring it that he soon lost the sight of it.

Hearing of the arrest of Mr. Wise, and of his being put under bonds, Mr. Stanley returned to Washington, and the affair was left to friends of both parties, whose award ended it.

REVERDY JOHNSON.

One of the very few actors in the scenes I have treated of in these pages, now living, is Mr. Reverdy Johnson, of Baltimore, —a name familiar to every man of intelligence in the United States, and designating one not less universally respected than known. Mr. Johnson has in his day filled a large space in public life, as a member of the United States Senate, as Attorney-General, and lastly as Minister Plenipotentiary to England, his special mission having been to settle the complications between the two governments arising out of the course pursued towards us by the British government during the war of the Rebellion.

But it is as a lawyer and advocate that he is best and most widely known. It is upon that pedestal that he stands a colossal and familiar figure before the nation. He has long occupied the position assigned him by his legal associates, as the head of the bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, than which there is no higher.

It is not my purpose, however, to speak of him as a jurist. That will be a task hereafter—and may it be long hereafter!—to be performed by some associate before the tribunal which best knows his worth, when he shall have passed away.

Although several times elected to the United States Senate as a Whig, and though he formed a part of General Taylor's cabinet, Mr. Johnson could scarcely be called a politician. He had little taste for mere party politics, and never partook of the warmth and asperity which animated both parties. However earnestly and ably he supported a Whig measure or opposed a Democratic one, no sharp or acrimonious word ever passed his lips. With the *fortiter in re* there was always mingled the *suaviter in modo*. He could use argument and illustration, but denunciation or harsh charges were foreign to him. Trained from youth in those schools of high-toned courtesy and refined manners, the Annapolis and Baltimore bars, he was such as his education and associations had made him.

Faithful always in the support of the principles and measures of his party, he was never its slave, but governed more by the dictates of his own judgment than by party rule. As there was no asperity in him, he excited none in his opponents. He was for many years one of a number of able men in Maryland who led the Whig party in its palmy days in that State, and was looked to as the head of the party.

As the representative of this country in England, no man was ever more cordially received, more generally fêted, or more effectually won the hearts of the British people. Mr. Johnson's ready and most felicitous oratorical powers, his happy tact in after-dinner speeches, in reply to the compliments of his hosts, of saying all that the occasion required, and no more, and saying this in the most acceptable manner, gratifying to the *amour-propre* of those he addressed, won for him the good feeling of the whole British nation, from the Queen down to the day-laborer, though in doing this he did not in the least compromit the dignity or interests of his own nation.

He is now one of the relics of the past, which time has kindly spared. Though the frosts of fourscore winters have whitened his head, they have never reached his heart, and he is still as bland and genial as an Indian summer's day.

THE PROVISIONAL TARIFF BILL VETOED.

The financial condition of the country at this time, the summer of 1842, as I have already said, was exceedingly bad. The pecuniary distress of the people, especially in all the Western and Southwestern States, was represented as unprecedented; the credit of the government was at a low ebb, and the treasury literally empty. The compromise tariff act of 1833 expired by its own limitation on the 1st of July, 1842, and no permanent tariff bill had yet been matured, or could be, so as to become a law by that time. In this emergency a "Provisional Tariff bill" was brought into the House by the chairman of the committee of ways and means, to prolong the existing tariff for one month, so as to gain time to pass a permanent bill. It passed the House and the Senate after considerable debate, but was returned with the veto of the President, the *third* he had applied to bills.

This veto produced an outburst in the House, and called forth severe comments. The measure was a necessity for the government itself, as well as for maintaining the credit of the country, and the veto was therefore considered by the Whigs as wantonly trifling with the great interests of the nation, as well as an unwarrantable exercise of power. Their indignation was at the boiling-point when Mr. Holmes, of South Carolina, instead of the chairman of the committee of ways and means, Mr. Fillmore, obtained the floor, and congratulated the country on this veto, declaring it a cause of thanksgiving, going on in a high strain of glorification of John Tyler for half an hour. This still further provoked and excited the indignation of the Whigs, several of whom—Mr. Granger, Mr. Saltonstall, Mr. Fillmore, and Mr. Lane, of Indiana—followed, pouring out torrents of invective upon Mr. Tyler's head. The debate lasted for several days,—"the peculiar friends of Mr. Tyler," and several of the Democratic members, especially from the South, defending him against the fierce denunciations of the Whigs. But the latter failed to pass the bill by a two-thirds vote, which stood,—ayes 114, noes 97.

FRANCIS GRANGER, MR. SALTONSTALL, A. H. H. STUART, MR. LANE, AND CALEB CUSHING.

Mr. Granger, Postmaster-General under General Harrison, was a man of large stature, finely proportioned, and of rare manly beauty. An impressive, not impulsive speaker, keen in repartee, always self-possessed, yet sometimes very earnest, and even eloquent, he never failed to win the attention of the House and enlist its sympathies. His high social position, the eminent name he bore,—being the son of Gideon Granger, Postmaster-General under Mr. Jefferson,—and, above all, his genial disposition and refined manners, made him a favorite with all.

Those who undertook to play a game of badinage, or retort courteous, with Mr. Granger, never failed to find him *at home* and ever ready with a Rowland for an Oliver. As an instance: Mr. Granger had occasion to comment rather sharply on Mr. Pickens's famous war report, in February, 1841, and in doing so got into a sort of sing-song way of speaking. When he had closed, Mr. Pickens rose and said the gentleman had entertained the House with a speech as musical as a bagpipe, and in a tone as subdued as a cabinet minister's. [Mr. Granger was then known to have been designated as Postmaster-General.]

This was a fair hit, and produced a general laugh at Mr. Granger's expense; in the midst of which he rose and, in the most good-natured, pleasant manner, said, "Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from South Carolina has compared my notes to the music of the bagpipe. True, sir, they are not of so warlike a character as those of the gentleman, but I imagine he will find the difference between the sound of our pipes to arise from the fact that my *bag* is not quite so full of *wind* as his." The retort had been provoked, the hit was palpable, the effect irresistible, and the House enjoyed a hearty laugh, in which Mr. Pickens had the grace to join. Mr. Granger's best shots were always off-hand, at game on the wing, and he never failed to hit. But his arrows were never barbed nor tipped with any venomous matter. He bore malice to no one, but a heart overflowing with generous feelings.

I have mentioned Mr. Saltonstall as one of those who spoke

upon the President's veto in words of burning eloquence. I will not let the occasion pass without speaking of him as I knew him.

Leverett Saltonstall, of Salem, Massachusetts, was one of nature's noblemen. His high ancestral blood was ennobled by the generous, manly, estimable qualities of his heart and his superior mental powers. Of a nervo-sanguine temperament, he had the delicacy and sentiment of a woman combined with the intellectual vigor of a man. The soul of honor, he scorned and despised everything low, mean, hypocritical, and false. He loved his friends with unusual warmth; respected an open, manly opponent, but loathed a treacherous friend or a cowardly enemy. When excited by any of these feelings, as he was greatly by Mr. Tyler's third veto, he carried the House by his impassioned and scorching eloquence. Mr. Saltonstall was as refined in his manners as in his feelings and sentiments; a warmer heart than his never beat in human bosom; no wonder, then, that he was a universal favorite.

In this debate two young men distinguished themselves by their ability, who have since filled important stations in the government, and justified the high expectations their efforts then inspired. I allude to Alexander H. H. Stuart, of Virginia, and Henry S. Lane, of Indiana; the first having filled the office of Secretary of the Interior, under Mr. Fillmore, and the other a seat in the United States Senate for six years.

Mr. Lane's speech was brilliant, impassioned,—flowing and rushing like a mountain stream. But it was too sparkling to make a deep impression.

Mr. Stuart spoke with the coolness of an experienced statesman. He took issue with Mr. Tyler upon some points of his message, and with much dignity, courtesy of manner, and fairness of argument overthrew the positions assumed by the message. He occasionally indulged in a strain of scornful reproach; but these indulgences were only used as a condiment to give zest to his general remarks. He elicited most respectful attention from both sides of the House.

It is to be lamented that the late Rebellion should still exclude a man like Mr. Stuart from the national councils,—a thorough

Union man, who made every effort in his power to prevent his State from joining the Rebellion, but was at last swept into it by an overwhelming and irresistible torrent. He was ever a true Whig of the Henry Clay school. He is, moreover, a true Virginia gentleman, "all of the olden time."

Another person took part in this debate who is at this time (1872) filling a most important position under the government, and performing duties which demand the very highest abilities of a jurist and statesman. I refer to Mr. Caleb Cushing, then the champion of Mr. Tyler and his vetoes. Up to the time when Mr. Tyler vetoed his own bank bill, as heretofore related, Mr. Cushing had been one of the most ultra of Whigs, but from that time he separated from them, and finally went over with his friend Wise to the Democrats, was appointed a brigadier-general by Mr. Polk in the Mexican war, and Attorney-General by President Franklin Pierce. But he no longer "gives to party what was meant for mankind,"—his own great mental powers and acquirements.

Mr. Cushing was a man whom the Whigs would have delighted to honor had he not, for causes known only to himself, turned his back upon them, joined "the Tyler squad," or "corporal's guard," and become estranged from and embittered against his old political friends. He won little fame in that *rôle*, and his mission to China—the political reward he had for the abandonment of the Whigs—added nothing to his stature as a statesman.

But, wisely leaving the field of politics, where his harvests had been greatly disproportioned to his industry and mental powers, he devoted himself to the more genial and remunerative labors of the legal profession, in which his great intellectual resources found "ample room and verge enough" even for their continued expansion, until he is admitted to be a profound scholar and most learned jurist and statesman, no less able with his pen than cogent and powerful in oral argument.

As one of the counsel of the United States before the Geneva Board of Arbitration to settle the controversy between the United States and Great Britain, he unquestionably stood *primus inter pares* in that assembly of men pre-eminent as statesmen

and jurists. The threescore and ten winters which have passed over his head have not visibly impaired his physical powers, while they have added largely to his mental stores. "His strength hath not failed, neither is his eye dimmed."

It may be said of Mr. Cushing, as it has been said of Chief-Justice Parsons, who was a native of the same place from which Mr. Cushing came,—Newburyport, Mass.,—that "he was one of the most unremitting and incessant students that ever lived;" that "when not called off by business, his daily habit was to sit and study from twelve to fifteen hours a day all his life, and this without exercise or relaxation." As it was said of Samuel Dexter, so it may be of Mr. Cushing, "He is not of that class of men who need or who desire *intimacies*, but is of the privileged few who can always be companions to themselves."

Seldom met in the salons of fashion, if sought, he may be found at his rooms investigating some abstruse question of science or knotty point of law, or threading the devious paths of modern philosophers to master their ideas and detect their fallacies.* As a linguist, it is reported that, when a member of General Pierce's cabinet, at state dinners he could converse with all the foreign ministers present in their respective languages; and it has also been stated that he made his oral argument before the Geneva tribunal of arbitration in French, as two or three of the arbitrators did not understand English.

No important subject ever came up for discussion in Congress while he was a member that did not find him well posted in regard to it by previous study, or prepared with a speech upon it having a strong odor of the midnight lamp.

Yet he could, when the occasion required, and he was roused into excitement, speak most forcibly and fluently off-hand, without premeditation, prompted only by his feelings; and on such occasions his language was more terse, sharp, and effective than in his studied speeches. Witness, as one instance of this, his dignified yet incisive and biting reply to Mr. Waddy Thompson's attack upon Mr. Adams and the North, when Mr. Thompson found Mr. Cushing's blade as keen as it was brilliant.

Another instance of Mr. Cushing's power of extempore

* Mr. Cushing is now (1874) minister to Spain.

speaking has been pleasantly related in "Harper's Magazine," by "An Old Stager." The circumstances related are within my own recollection. "An Old Stager" says,—

"Early in his first session Mr. Cushing read a carefully-written argument on a subject of more than ordinary interest. The great ability displayed, and his appearance of extreme youth, attracted general interest. It so happened that his views ran counter to those of most of the Western members, and old Ben Hardin, of Kentucky, a coarse, rude man, of great intellectual vigor, likened by John Randolph to a 'kitchen knife sharpened on a brickbat,' replied to him in a strain in which invective was mingled with argument, and which was intentionally cutting and offensive. He evidently supposed Cushing to be a mere bookworm,—a man of the closet,—whom he could silence by a sarcasm. He knew Cushing's speech had been written out, and thought a harsh impromptu reply would crush the young man. But, to his astonishment, the rejoinder, made on the spur of the moment, turned the tables, and the House, which had heartily enjoyed the vituperative eloquence of Hardin, relished still more Cushing's tart and effective answer."

On this occasion Mr. Hardin imprudently made some quotation from Homer. This was playing into Mr. Cushing's strong suit, as he was quite *au fait* with Homer, and thereupon he ran a parallel between the snarling Thersites of the Greek bard and the member from Kentucky, fixing upon him the additional sobriquet of "Snarling Thersites."

THE PASSAGE OF A REVENUE BILL.—IT IS VETOED.

The labors of Congress during the months of July and August, 1842, were very onerous. The compromise revenue act of 1833 expiring on the 1st of July, it was supposed that no revenue from duties on foreign merchandise could after that date be legally collected: hence the importance of passing a revenue bill before that date. The provisional bill having been vetoed, the committee of ways and means set diligently to work to prepare another. But the bill they now brought in provided for the continuation of the act for the distribution of the proceeds of the sales of public lands among the States, and

met with the same fate as the provisional bill, "VETO, DITTO," as Mr. Adams said.

The bill underwent sharp debate both in the House and Senate. Mr. Calhoun assailed it with great vehemence. His speech on this occasion was what might be termed his "platform" for the Presidency, he then being understood to be a candidate. He maintained with his usual ability and subtlety his peculiar notions of political economy, that is to say, *free trade, hard money, and low prices.* He put forth some very extraordinary propositions, among which was this: that high duties would lead to high prices, and that high prices would ruin the manufacturers! Another was that high prices and low wages went hand in hand, and that low prices and high wages always were inseparable! Another, that high prices would inevitably result in large importations of gold and silver, which would produce a redundant currency, greatly to be deprecated!

In his peroration, he distinctly announced the inscription he placed upon his flag, which was, "FREE TRADE, LOW DUTIES, SEPARATION FROM ALL BANKS, AND A STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE CONSTITUTION."

Mr. Evans, in reply to Mr. Calhoun, and some others who had taken part against the bill in the course of its debate in the Senate, and particularly Mr. Woodbury, noticed the oft-repeated objection that this bill gave too much revenue. "All we ask," said Mr. Evans, "is the revenue which you had, and we will support the government, pay your debts, and distribute among the States the proceeds of the sales of public lands. The amount of revenue which you had was more than this bill will yield, and yet it is notorious, indisputable, and undenied, that you spent eight millions a year for several of the last years you were in power, over and above the receipts from the customs and the public lands! You left the country in debt and without a revenue to meet its current expenses: at the extra session we passed laws which put a stop to frauds upon the revenue to the amount of five millions a year, which you winked at and permitted. The extra session, therefore, of which you complain, saved its own expenses more than ten times told."

The Senator from South Carolina had spoken of the tariff of 1828 as "a bill of abominations," and had applied other harsh epithets to it. Mr. Evans asked, Who made it a bill of abominations? "Not its friends: its enemies undertook to make the bill as onerous as they could, in order to defeat it, but they were caught in their own trap. Instead of its friends voting against it on account of the amendments inserted in it by its opponents, they took its enemies at their word, and voted for it. It was a dangerous game to play. But who voted for it? Mr. Benton, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Woodbury voted for some of the most objectionable features of it. Nay, more, Mr. Van Buren himself supported the bill." This allusion to so many Senators present who voted for the bill of 1828 created considerable merriment, and a fluttering among the wounded pigeons.

Mr. Evans went on to notice and refute Mr. Calhoun's extraordinary positions, referred to above. He said it was the first time he ever heard that by getting high prices abroad for their products, manufacturers, or any other class of men, would be ruined and broken up, or that a balance of trade in favor of a country which balance was paid in gold and silver was ruinous and to be guarded against. He certainly had never seen the proposition laid down in any work on political economy he had ever read, and should have to turn to his books and to the subject and commence his studies anew. And, further, it was certainly a new doctrine to him that when prices were high wages must be low, and *vice versa*. It was certainly very extraordinary that articles the chief value of which was made by labor, that is to say, articles of which labor constituted the chief cost, should sell high when labor was low, and low when labor was high!

Mr. Woodbury contended that a twenty per cent. ad valorem duty was the "*natural*" duty; that it would give a revenue of twenty-two millions per annum, which was ample.

To this Mr. Simmons replied that when he (Mr. Woodbury) and his friends were in power they had a revenue far exceeding this, and yet accumulated a debt of eight millions a year, which they left the Whigs to pay, with a decreasing tariff and a diminishing revenue.

At length the bill passed the Senate,—25 to 23,—went to the

President, and was by him returned to the House with his veto,—veto No. 4: vetoed, mainly, because it provided for the continuance of the distribution of the proceeds of the sales of public lands.

The Whigs thought, at this time, that the public lands should not be viewed as a source of revenue; that these lands belonged to the *States*, and when sold the proceeds should go to the *States*. The Democrats and Tyler men contended that the proceeds of these lands should go into the treasury and constitute a portion of the national revenue.

The veto message, which added fuel to the flame already blazing between Mr. Tyler and the Whigs, was, on motion of Mr. Adams, referred to a select committee of thirteen, of which he was, of course, the chairman.

Meantime, a bill to apportion the representatives among the States, and to fix the ratio of representation, was passed by Congress and sent to the President, which required that members of Congress should be elected by districts, each district to elect a single member. The bill had met with violent opposition in both branches of Congress, but passed by decided majorities. It was signed by the President, who, however, filed a paper in the Secretary of State's office giving his reasons for entertaining deep and strong doubts of the constitutionality of the law, in that it purports to be mandatory on the States to form districts for the choice of Representatives.

A resolution was adopted by the House calling upon the Secretary of State for a copy of this paper, which was sent to the House. It caused much feeling in that body, and was referred to a committee, of which Mr. Adams was chairman; who, as usual, made a report condemning the act of the President as unwarranted, wholly unprecedented, of evil example for the future, and declaring that this House solemnly protests against its ever being repeated or adduced as a precedent.

The committee stated that they considered the mandate to the States to provide for electing representatives to Congress by single districts as the most important and useful feature of the act. Mr. Tyler, they said, was, by the course he had taken, only inviting such States as preferred to elect their

members by general ticket to violate or refuse to comply with the law.

This excellent act is still the law of the land, and ever likely to be. New Hampshire, Georgia, and Missouri refused for a short time to comply with it, but finally became ashamed of their obstinacy and harmonized with the other States. Mr. Adams treated the subject with his characteristic power and causticity.

MR. ADAMS'S REPORT.

On the motion of Mr. Adams, the President's veto message accompanying the revenue bill which he returned to the House was referred to a select committee of thirteen, of which he was chairman. In a few days he prepared and presented his report to the House, signed by all the committee except Mr. Gilmer and Mr. C. J. Ingersoll, who each made a separate report.

Mr. Adams's report bore the stamp of the mint whence it emanated. "The message," Mr. Adams said, "is the last of a series of Executive measures the result of which has been to defeat and nullify the whole action of the legislative authority of this Union upon the most important interests of the nation. . . . The first development of the dangerous exercise of this constitutional power was by its being used to defeat the chartering of a United States Bank under General Jackson." He then spoke of Mr. Tyler's using it for the same purpose on two or three occasions, even to defeat his own bill. Speaking of the bill which Messrs. Sergeant and Berrien received from Mr. Tyler, and which passed both branches of Congress precisely as it left Mr. Tyler's hands, the report said, "This bill was presented to him [for his signature] in the very terms which he had prescribed as necessary to obtain his sanction, and met the same fate with its predecessor; and it is remarkable that the reasons assigned for the refusal to approve the second bill are in direct and immediate conflict with those which had been assigned for the refusal to sign the first.

"Thus the measure first among those deemed by the legislature of the Union indispensably necessary for the salvation of its highest interests and for the restoration of its credit, its honor, its prosperity, was prostrated, defeated, annulled, by a

weak and wavering obstinacy of one man, accidentally, and not by the voice of the people, invested with that terrible power, as if prophetically described by one who is one of his own chosen ministers at this day,* as the 'right to deprive the people of self-government.'

* * * * * * * *

"And now, to crown this system of continual and unrelenting exercise of Executive legislation by the alternate gross abuse of constitutional power and bold assumption of powers never vested in him by any law, we come to the veto message referred by the House to this committee."

The report proceeds to review the reasons assigned by John Tyler for vetoing the revenue bill, and Mr. Adams then says,—

"They [the committee] perceive that the whole legislative power of the Union has been for the last fifteen months, with regard to the authority of Congress upon measures of vital importance, in a state of suspended animation, strangled by the five times repeated stricture of the Executive cord. They observe that under these unexampled obstructions to the exercise of their high and legitimate duties, they have hitherto preserved the most respectful forbearance towards the Executive chief; that while he has, time after time, annulled by the mere act of his will their commission from the people to enact laws for the common welfare, they have forborne even the expression of their resentment for these multiplied insults and injuries; they believed they had a high destiny to fulfill by administering to the people in the form of law remedies for the sufferings which they had too long endured. The will of one man has frustrated all their labors and prostrated all their powers. The majority of the committee believe that the case has occurred in the annals of our Union contemplated by the founders of the Constitution, by the grant to the House of Representatives of the power to impeach the President of the United States; but they are aware that the resort to that expedient might, in the present condition of public affairs, prove abortive. They see that the irreconcilable difference of opinion and action between the Legislative and Executive departments of the government is but sympathetic with

* John C. Spencer, who had denounced Tyler in severe terms six months before.

the same discordant views and feelings among the people. To them alone the final issue of the struggle must be left."

The report closed with a resolution to amend the Constitution, so that instead of the words "two-thirds," twice repeated in the second paragraph of the seventh section, first article, of the Constitution, the words "a majority of the whole number" shall be substituted in both cases.

The report itself was agreed to by the House by a large majority; but the accompanying resolution caused debate, and was not adopted.

That Mr. Adams could perform so much mental and physical labor as his numerous reports and speeches implied, especially as he wrote with a trembling hand, at the age of seventy-one, was a wonder to all; yet he never absented himself from his seat in the House to perform this labor.

MR. TYLER'S PROTEST.

Mr. Tyler felt the severe animadversions and dignified rebuke of the committee and the House. His friend Gilmer, being one of the committee, endeavored to ward off the blow by a minority report, his alone; but it was like the attempt of a child to turn the blow from the battle-axe of Richard Cœur de Lion. Mr. Ingersoll, too, came to the rescue, but with no better effect; and Mr. Tyler, therefore, in further imitation of General Jackson, issued a *protest*, though he had himself condemned General Jackson for the act he now imitated. The protest was sent to the House, where it was read, and only served to intensify the feeling of exasperation which there existed towards him, and his votes in the Senate condemnatory of General Jackson were now brought to bear with great force against himself.

Upon the reading of the protest, all eyes were turned towards Mr. Adams, who did not immediately rise; but no one else rising, and members looking to him as if expecting him to respond, he rose, and said that there seemed to be an expectation on the part of some gentlemen that he should propose to the House some measure suitable to be adopted on the present occasion. He knew of no reason for such an expectation, but the fact that he had been the mover of the resolution for the

appointment of the committee which had made the report referred to in the message, had been appointed by the Speaker chairman of the committee, and that the report against which the President of the United States had sent to the House such a multitude of protests was written by him. So far as it had been so written, Mr. Adams held himself responsible to the House, to the country, to the world, and to posterity; and so far as he was the author of the report he held himself responsible to the President also. The President should hear from him elsewhere than here on that subject. [I am not aware that Mr. Adams ever followed up this subject, according to the intimation here given.] Mr. Adams said it was because the report had been adopted by the House that the President had sent such a bundle of protests; and therefore he felt no necessity or obligation to suggest what measures the House ought to adopt for the vindication of its own dignity and honor; and perhaps, from considerations of delicacy, he was, indeed, the very last man in the House to propose any measure under the circumstances."

Mr. Botts, who was a member of the committee, stated that in 1834 the Senate adopted certain resolutions condemning the course of General Jackson in removing the deposits from the Bank of the United States; that, in consequence of this act of the Senate, President Jackson sent to that body a *protest* against the right of the Senate to express any opinion concerning his public course; that the Senate, after a long, elaborate discussion of the whole matter, and the most eloquent and overpowering torrent of debate ever listened to in this country, adopted three resolutions,—the first being, in substance, that while the Senate is, and ever will be, ready to receive such messages from the President as the Constitution and laws and the usual course of business authorized him to transmit to it, they could not recognize the right in him to make a formal protest against any of its proceedings.

On this resolution, Mr. Botts said, the yeas and nays were taken, and stood—yeas 17, nays 16, Mr. Tyler voting in the affirmative.

The second resolution was as follows:

"*Resolved*, That the aforesaid protest is a breach of the privileges of the Senate, and that it be not entered on the journal."

This was adopted by the same vote, John Tyler, now acting President of the United States, voting in the affirmative.

The third resolution was in these words:

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States has no right to send a protest to the Senate against any of its proceedings."

For this resolution the record shows that the same John Tyler voted. Mr. Botts also stated that Mr. Daniel Webster, now Secretary of State, voted for each of these resolutions.

Mr. Botts declined making any remarks of his own upon the extraordinary proceeding of Mr. Tyler, but would read, for the edification of the House, a portion of the remarks made by Mr. Webster in the Senate on the occasion alluded to. Having done this, he proposed the passage of the same resolutions by the House, and called for the yeas and nays on each, which were ordered, and stood—ayes 87, noes 46.

And so Mr. Tyler got another rebuke from the House, which he fully deserved.

ANOTHER REVENUE BILL.—THE TARIFF ACT OF 1842.

The country was now in an anomalous condition. It was a matter of grave doubt whether the government could legally collect any duties on foreign merchandise, and such duties were paid by importers under protest. The government was deeply in debt, and unable to borrow a few millions. Congress had been in session nearly nine months,—it was now the last of August,—and had been so paralyzed by Mr. Tyler's vetoes that they had not as yet been able to pass a revenue bill to relieve the country: yet, with a bankrupt treasury, protested bills lying over to the amount of a million and a half of dollars, and unable to raise anything by loan, John Tyler had the pig-headedness to veto the only revenue bill he had any reason to suppose Congress would pass. All, however, were not so obstinate and stubborn as he.

Mr. Tyler's alleged principal objection to the two tariff bills he had vetoed within a month was, that they provided for the continuance of the distribution of the proceeds of the sales of

public lands, to which he was now opposed, though it was shown that he was formerly in favor of that distribution. In this debate, Mr. Alexander H. H. Stuart, of Virginia, fairly stated the issue between the Whigs and Mr. Tyler in regard to the revenue bills. He said,—

"The President has rested his veto upon the grounds of expediency alone, and not upon any conscientious or constitutional scruples. He withholds his assent because of its supposed conflict with the Compromise act of 1833. I take issue with the President in regard to this matter of fact, and maintain that there is no such conflict. The President's particular point of objection to the temporary tariff bill is, that it contemplates a prospective distribution of the land proceeds. Now, conceding that the President has put a correct construction on our bill, I aver that it is no violation of the Compromise act to withdraw the land proceeds from the ordinary purposes of the government and distribute them among the States. On the contrary, I maintain that the act distinctly contemplates the distribution of the land proceeds, that the *distribution was one of the essential elements of the Compromise*, and that the *failure to distribute the land fund would of itself be a violation of the true understanding* of those who adopted the Compromise, and a palpable fraud upon the rights of one of the parties to it."

Several attempts were now made to have a bill brought in similar in all respects to the one vetoed, except the distribution section; but these attempts failed for several days, even the Democrats of Pennsylvania voting no, although all protection to home industry was gone, even if any duties at all could be legally collected, and the vetoed bill was highly protective.

In these attempts, the vote required to succeed was a two-thirds vote, which could not be obtained. At length, on the 22d day of August, the House, going into committee of the whole, took up a bill from the committee on the judiciary, called Barnard's bill, to supply a temporary defect or failure in the law relating to the collection of duties on imports. Mr. McKennan, of Pennsylvania, moved to strike out all of this bill after the enacting clause and insert the vetoed bill, minus the twenty-seventh section, which related to distribution. This

threw the House into a delectable commotion and war of tactics; but a vote was at length taken, and the motion of Mr. McKennan agreed to,—99 to 67.

The bill was passed, and immediately sent to the Senate, where it caused a most spirited and earnest debate, in which Mr. Choate, Mr. Woodbury, Mr. Crittenden, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Morehead, and others participated. Many of the Whigs in the Senate had been, and were, up to the last hour, opposed to any apparent yielding to the mulish stubbornness of the President, by passing a revenue bill minus the distribution of the land fund; and among these were the Kentucky Senators, Messrs. Crittenden and Morehead. Knowing this, Mr. Choate took the floor and made a pathetic and eloquent appeal to those Whigs upon whose votes the success or defeat of the bill was supposed to depend, and especially to the Kentucky Senators; depicted the present state of the country, and what its condition must and would be should this measure fail. Mr. Woodbury opposed the bill. Mr. Crittenden took the floor. He stated the ground they occupied; for what the Whigs had contended; what the people decided by the campaign of 1840; how they had been defrauded out of the fruits of that victory, and what they had now to do to save the country from utter ruin. Till within a few hours he had been unable to make up his mind to support this measure; but he had looked at the subject calmly and deliberately. It was mortifying to be compelled in some measure to yield to Executive obstinacy, and galling to be taunted with thus submitting; but he yielded to a provision of the Constitution, which, however odious its abuse has made it, is nevertheless a provision of the Constitution. He yielded to the urgent wants of the people and their pressing appeals. He yielded in deference to the Whig House of Representatives, in whose patriotism he had unbounded confidence. Was he told, with a taunt, that he surrendered the public lands? He replied that he surrendered them as he surrendered his purse to the robber; he gave up no tittle of the property which had been wrested from him, and he now gave notice that he would pursue the subject till he again recovered the stolen property.

Mr. Calhoun declared this bill to be more deeply stamped

with *protection* than any one that had ever been passed by Congress. He said it was utterly impossible that such a bill should long remain in existence: it would be repealed, probably within two years. He gave the North clearly to understand that he would make war upon it, and that the "Democracy" of the South would not give up till they had procured its repeal.

The vote being taken, Mr. Wright, of New York, and Mr. Williams, of Maine, not having answered at the first call, the vote stood 22 affirmative and 23 negative; but before it was announced these two Senators came in and voted in the affirmative.

Two or three Whigs voted in the negative, who, had their votes been necessary to carry the bill, would have voted in the affirmative: these were Messrs. Mangum, Graham, and Berrien. And so passed through Congress the long-to-be-remembered tariff act of 1842. It went to the President, and received his signature on the 30th of August.

No measure ever had a more vivifying influence upon a country than this tariff act of 1842. Its effect was like magic. The furnaces and forges of Pennsylvania, which had been abandoned for a long time, and stood solitary monuments of the ignorance, stupidity, and political prejudices of members of Congress, now blazed up on every hill, and gave token of restored life and prosperity. The cotton-mills of New England, and, indeed, every branch of domestic manufacture, awoke as from a long, lethargic sleep, and life, cheerfulness, and confidence pervaded the whole country. Never had business of all kinds been more brisk and remunerative. From a state of extraordinary depression, stagnancy, and suffering, the whole country sprang at once into an extraordinary condition of animation and prosperity, which lasted till the repeal of this act in 1846, when the threats now made by Mr. Calhoun, and the Democrats generally, that it should be repealed, were consummated by a President elected by the vote of Pennsylvania on the ground that his election over Henry Clay was necessary to SAVE "the Democratic tariff act of 1842"!

Congress adjourned on the 13th day of September, after an unusually laborious and exciting session of over nine months;

and glad were members to return once more to their families and constituents.

MILLARD FILLMORE.

As chairman of the committee of ways and means, Mr. Fillmore was the leader of the House, and upon him much of the responsibility of its doings rested. He devoted himself with unremitting assiduity to the duties of his station, laboring night and day to prepare those complicated revenue bills in which the interests of every species of industry were intricately involved: never discouraged by his frequent defeats and the blocking vetoes, but renewing his efforts at every set-back, until finally the revenue act of 1842 crowned his efforts and gave renewed life to the country.

It was the part Mr. Fillmore had performed in this Congress that commended him to the Whigs, some years later, for the second office of the government.

Though not an eloquent man or an attractive speaker, he was always well supplied with facts, which he could give to the House in a plain, clear, business-like manner, such as that body always listens to, when the subject is one that interests it, with unwearied attention. His voice was remarkably strong, full, and clear; he spoke with deliberation, and his enunciation of every word was so distinct that it could be heard in every part of the House. But, while he always commanded the strictest attention of members, he could seldom interest a popular crowd. He lacked imagination, and knew nothing of clap-trap. His figures belonged to arithmetic, not to rhetoric. As a lawyer, his place was in the office or before a bench of judges; not before a jury.

MR. TYLER CHANGES HIS POLICY IN REGARD TO REMOVALS AND APPOINTMENTS.

By referring to the address to the public, which Mr. Tyler put forth on assuming the duties of President, it will be seen that he then declared that he "would remove no incumbent from office who has faithfully and honestly acquitted himself of the duties of his office, except in case where such officer has been guilty of an active partisanship, or by secret means

has given his official influence to the purpose of party, thereby bringing the patronage of the government in conflict with the freedom of elections. Nor shall I neglect to apply the same unbending rule to those of my own appointment."

This was good Whig doctrine, and very plain. It, moreover, bore the stamp of sincerity.

In his annual message, in December, 1841, he made an ostentatious display of his hostility to the corrupt use of Executive patronage; at any rate, he spoke most emphatically against it, deeming it his duty to bring the subject to the consideration of Congress. "I allude," he says, "to the exercise of the power which usage, rather than reason, has invested in the President, of removing incumbents from office in order to substitute others more in favor with the dominant party. My own conduct in this respect has been governed by a conscientious purpose to exercise the removing power only in cases of unfaithfulness, or inability, or in those in which its exercise appeared necessary in order to discountenance and suppress that spirit of active partisanship on the part of holders of office which not only withdraws them from the steady and impartial discharge of their official duties, but exerts an undue and injurious influence over elections, and degrades the character of the government itself, inasmuch as it exhibits the chief magistrate as using a party, through his agents, to the secret plots and open workings of political parties."

He who was about to "remove honest, faithful, and competent incumbents from office in order to substitute others more in favor with the dominant party" invoked Congress to take this abuse of Executive power in hand and put some check upon it; to tie the hands of the Executive!

But "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." He had begun to dream of being President by election of the people. But how could he effect this? One means was to freely use the patronage of the government, and thereby purchase partisans. His course soon showed that he had cast to the winds all his virtuous notions about not removing honest incumbents from office, and had concluded to use any means to attain his object. He wanted partisans and supporters, and if offices

could buy them, offices they should have. Every one but himself saw the futility of his new policy to accomplish his purpose; every one saw he was deceiving himself; that he took counsel of his own vanity, and was carried away by flattering notions that he could beat Mr. Clay, and become President of the United States by the voice of the people in spite of him.

Surrounded by flatterers and sycophants, who had their own selfish ends to serve, how was he to know the truth,—that he had no followers save those in office, or who were seeking office at his hands?

But the experiment of the "spoils system" was now entered upon. Mr. Jonathan Roberts, collector of customs at Philadelphia, formerly a Senator in Congress, and a man of rare honesty and unbending principles, was required to remove certain designated men from the custom-house, and appoint others, also designated, for no other cause than that those to be removed were *not*, and those to be appointed professed to be, *Tyler men.*

Mr. Roberts was a Republican of the Jeffersonian school; not "a man of principle according to his interest," but according to the dictates of his honest judgment and conscience; nor would he swerve one hair from those principles to hold any office in the gift of the government. Refusing to obey the Executive mandate, he came to Washington to remonstrate with Mr. Tyler. He reminded him of the letter addressed by Mr. Webster, as Secretary of State under General Harrison, to the other heads of Departments, in regard to appointments and removals,—also to his, Mr. Tyler's, own address, and his message of December, 1841,—and desired to know if this wise, Washingtonian policy was to be set aside, and the "spoils system," which had done so much to corrupt the country, to be again carried into effect. His only answer was a positive order to *obey* the mandate or *resign*; but he peremptorily refused to do either, and was removed.

The policy now adopted was to use the patronage of the government to build up a *Tyler party* and secure the election of John Tyler as President. One of the most distinguished victims of this insane ambition was the gallant General Solo-

mon Van Rensselaer, the hero of Queenstown Heights, who was appointed postmaster at Albany by General Harrison. But the Tyler organ declared that "all who are not for us are against us;" and, "It is not enough that the office-holders do not *oppose* the administration. We want vigorous and bold men. We want men who are ready to put their shoulders to the wheel and drive along the car of the administration through every obstacle and every opposition." Men like Mr. Roberts and General Van Rensselaer were not such as were needed, and were therefore summarily dismissed.

MR. WEBSTER STILL REMAINS IN THE CABINET.

Mr. Webster's avowed reason for remaining in Mr. Tyler's cabinet when his colleagues, appointed by General Harrison, resigned, was, that an important negotiation was pending with England, and it was necessary that he should remain long enough to negotiate a treaty with Lord Ashburton.

The treaty was now negotiated, but he manifested no intention to resign, notwithstanding the extraordinary change of policy in regard to removals and appointments, so utterly at variance with that which he had promulged as the organ of General Harrison's administration. He thus subjected himself to the severe criticism of Whigs and the Whig press. Mr. Tyler's administration was fast sliding over towards the Democratic party, which, however, turned a cold shoulder to him, and repelled, as a party, his blandishments and dalliances.

In the month of September, soon after the adjournment of Congress, Mr. Webster visited Boston, and took the relief his long and severe labors during the session rendered necessary. While there, desiring to address the Whigs of Boston, a meeting was called at Faneuil Hall for that purpose, where assembled the first men of the city and vicinity, and a large concourse of people. Mr. Webster's was the only speech delivered: and such a speech! It was stamped with Websterian power, and commanded the deepest attention, often eliciting great applause; but it was a manifestation of ill temper from beginning to end, and he laid about him as if determined that his blows should be felt. Little did the prominent Whigs of

Boston anticipate the particular kind of feast to which they had been invited. The whole purpose and scope of the speech seemed to be to call the Whigs to a reckoning, and to read them a severe lecture for having separated themselves from John Tyler. A State convention had lately been held in Massachusetts to nominate a candidate for governor and other State officers, which convention had also nominated Henry Clay for President and John Davis for Vice-President; and it had also adopted a resolution separating the Whig party from John Tyler. These acts of the convention excited his special animosity, and he poured upon that respectable body a perfect tempest of sneers, taxing them with presumption in undertaking to read Mr. Tyler out of the Whig church. Presently, suspecting they might think of doing the same good office even to himself, he declared, "I am a Whig, a Faneuil Hall Whig! I always have been one, and I always shall be one; and if anybody undertakes to turn me out of the pale of that communion, let him see to it who gets out first. The individual who addresses you—where do his brother Whigs intend to place him? Generally, when a divorce takes place, the parents divide the children. I should be glad to know where I am to go."

This speech called forth severe remarks, and from none more caustic than from the press of his own State.

MORSE'S TELEGRAPH.

On the opening of the third session of the Twenty-seventh Congress, Mr. Morse, of telegraphic celebrity, obtained leave to set up his telegraph in the lower rooms of the Capitol, in order to exhibit to Senators and members its operation, he being an applicant for an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars with which to establish an experimental line from Washington to Baltimore.

No one dreamed then that continents, separated by oceans, could be connected by telegraphic wires, and messages transmitted, almost instantaneously, between the most distant parts of the earth, crossing rivers, bays, lakes, and oceans.

The rooms in which were the termini of this temporary

illustrative telegraph were almost constantly filled by Senators, members of the House, and others, and the two operators were often kept busy for hours transmitting messages to and from those in the different rooms, to the great wonder of those who sent and those who received them. They could hardly credit their senses. Members in the different rooms would carry on for some time a jocose conversation, full of wit, point, and repartee, to the great amusement of others in the rooms, apparently with as much ease as if they stood face to face. Still, it was no easy matter to convince many that this telegraph could be made practically useful to the world. It was considered by some as a sort of Redheffer's perpetual-motion machine,—might do for short distances, but impracticable for long ones. However, there were others who, if they did not foresee all the great results to be wrought by this invention, or discovery,—and who could at that time?—were satisfied that it was destined to effect great results.

Mr. Morse asked for an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars; and a bill was introduced authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to make an experiment, by erecting a line of telegraph—of a single wire—from Washington to Baltimore, and making an appropriation for that purpose.

The bill came up, and was considered in committee of the whole on the 21st of February. It met with most decided opposition, its opponents, not numerous, endeavoring to kill it by ridicule. Mr. Cave Johnson, who, a little more than a year after this, was Postmaster-General, moved that one-half of the appropriation be expended in making experiments in mesmerism, which was sustained by twenty votes. Another member moved that the Secretary use the appropriation in trying an experiment to construct a railroad to the moon. Other ridiculous propositions were made, some of them creating much merriment and pleasant badinage among members. Prominent among the opponents of the bill were Cave Johnson and George W. Jones, of Tennessee; Edmund Burke, of New Hampshire, Commissioner of Patents under Mr. Polk; George S. Houston and William W. Payne, of Alabama; William Pettit and Andrew Kennedy, of Indiana; and Samuel

Gordon, of New York. Mr. Pettit, of Indiana, afterwards a Democratic Senator, opposed it, and *looked upon all magnetic telegraphs as miserable chimeras, fit for nothing. Nobody who did not understand the Pottawattomie or some other outlandish jargon could know what the telegraph reported.*

Governor Wallace, of Indiana, who voted for the appropriation, was superseded by William J. Brown, one of the leaders of the Democratic party, who made the vote of Governor Wallace the great theme in his electioneering canvass.

But, finally, the opposition gave up, and the bill was reported to the House, and passed by a small majority.

While the bill was undergoing the ordeal of ridicule in the committee of the whole, Mr. Morse stood leaning on the bar of the House, or railing, in a state of intense excitement and anxiety. Seeing him thus, I went to him, remarking that he appeared to be much excited. He turned and said, "I have an awful headache," putting his hand to his forehead. I said, "You are anxious." "I have reason to be," he replied; "and if you knew how important this is to me, you would not wonder. I have spent seven years in perfecting this invention, and all that I had: if it succeeds, I am a made man; if it fails, I am ruined. I have a large family, and not money enough to pay my board bill when I leave the city." I assured him he need not feel so anxious, as the bill would pass. "Are you sure of it?" he asked. "Yes, perfectly; all this ridicule goes for nothing." He was soon relieved by the vote, first in the committee, and then in the House. I seldom met him in after-years that he did not recall the conversation between us, and remark how much relief my assurance gave him. The ridicule cast upon his great invention, or discovery, whichever it may be, mortified him, and led him to fear the defeat of the bill. By its passage he was, as he said, "a made man:" one of the celebrities of the world, whose fame can never die so long as man can flash words over continents and under oceans with a speed that utterly annihilates time and space. The name of MORSE and the ELECTRO-MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH are forever inseparable.

THE SWORD AND STAFF OF WASHINGTON.

For many years those who visited the Patent Office were shown, among other interesting relics of Washington, the sword he usually wore in battle, during the Revolution, and the cane which had been left to him by the venerable Franklin; both of which sacred relics had been presented to the United States by Samuel T. Washington, to whom they had descended from his illustrious relative. These articles are now, and it is to be hoped ever will be, sacredly preserved by our government.

At twelve o'clock, Mr. Somers, of Virginia, arose and addressed the Speaker, amid perfect silence, in language at once simple, full of feeling, and adapted to the occasion.

He gave a brief history of the sword he was about to present to the nation through its representative body. In giving an account of the sword, he stated that, although he who had been the instrument of Divine Providence to achieve our independence had others of more intrinsic value, and of far more beauty, which he wore on occasions of ceremony and parade, yet this, —holding it up to the view of the House,—this was his battle-sword,—it was the "sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

The staff of Franklin, bequeathed to Washington, was next the subject of brief remark, and its possession by the person at whose request he now presented it to the nation as a proper companion of the sword of the father of his country, accounted for. The closing remarks of Mr. Somers were as eloquent as they were chaste and appropriate.

Having concluded, and placed the sacred relics in the hands of the Sergeant-at-arms, who conveyed them to the Speaker, Mr. Adams rose and prefaced the resolution he was about to offer, and which was called for by the occasion, with some remarks, and concluded by offering a resolution, which was adopted unanimously:

"That the thanks of this Congress be presented to Samuel T. Washington, of Kanawha County, Virginia, for the present of the sword used by his illustrious relative, George Washington, in the military career of his early youth in the Seven Years' War, and throughout the war of the National Inde-

pendence, and of the staff bequeathed by the patriot, statesman, and sage, Benjamin Franklin, to the same leader of the armies of freedom in the Revolutionary war, George Washington; that these precious relics are hereby accepted in the name of the nation; that they be deposited for safe-keeping in the Department of State of the United States, and that a copy of this resolution, signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, be transmitted to the said Samuel T. Washington."

THE WINDING UP OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS.

As the period approached when the Twenty-seventh Congress must cease to exist, rumors of changes in the cabinet became more and more rife, and crowds of office-seekers, ready to swear allegiance to Mr. Tyler, gathered at Washington and beset the Departments. Many changes were made, and more promised. At length it was announced that Mr. Forward, Secretary of the Treasury, had sent in his resignation, to take effect on the 1st of March.

Mr. Wise was, in the mean time, nominated as minister to France, and Mr. Irwin, one of "the guard," as chargé to Denmark. It had been intended that Mr. Forward should vacate the Treasury Department after the 4th of March, when he would be succeeded by Mr. Spencer. But, as the latter did not wish to place himself in the power of the Senate at this time, Mr. Forward's resignation was a perplexing circumstance. Finally, however, Mr. Cushing was nominated as Secretary of the Treasury,—a broad hint to Mr. Webster to make his *congé;* not the only one that had lately been given him.

Mr. Everett was minister to England, but had been nominated minister to China, and was now confirmed. Had he accepted the new appointment, it would have left our mission to England vacant, which it was well understood Mr. Webster was willing to fill, and Mr. Tyler more than willing he should, since by that arrangement he could be relieved of the presence of one who was now in the way. But Mr. Everett saw no advantage in the change proposed to him, and therefore wisely preferred to remain where he was.

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE SESSION.

Matters of great moment were culminating, and curiosity, as well as expectation, was on tiptoe. Many anxious hearts were throbbing with hope or sinking with fear. The Senate was "master of the situation." It was in executive session most of the time from six o'clock P.M. till twelve midnight.

At length it was announced that the nomination of Mr. Wise had been rejected. There were those who exulted over this, and those whose hearts it made heavy,—some, excited to anger. Anon came word that the nomination of Mr. Irwin, one of "the guard," was confirmed. As no one entertained other than friendly feelings to him, his confirmation was generally gratifying. Then, after a period of suspense, word came from the Senate that Mr. Cushing's nomination was rejected. But immediately it was whispered that both Mr. Wise and Mr. Cushing had been renominated; that the President was determined not to abandon them, but to force them upon the Senate.

All these things, together with a crowd of women who had, as usual, on the last night of the session, been let into the hall (the most improper time of all others), produced a very lively excitement among members and others. Three times were these gentlemen nominated, and three times were they rejected, —the last time by such a vote as told the President that the Senate was not to be coerced into a compliance with his wishes.

On the first nomination, the vote of the Senate stood, for confirming Mr. Wise, 12; against it, 24. On the second nomination, it stood 8 to 26; on the third, 2 to 29. On the first nomination of Mr. Cushing the vote was 19 to 27; on the second nomination, 10 to 27; on the third, 2 to 29. It was therefore useless to press them further upon the Senate.

The two Houses adjourned about half-past two o'clock on the morning of the 4th of March.

SAMUEL T. VINTON.

It would be doing injustice to let the Twenty-seventh Congress pass out of sight and out of mind without noticing one

of its most estimable and useful members,—the gentleman named above. Mr. Vinton was a man of slight frame; wore spectacles from near-sightedness; very reserved and unassuming, and with a weak voice; no way fitted to contend for the floor among ten or twenty members bawling, "Mr. Speaker!" with stentorian lungs. But he was possessed of that remarkable good sense and sound judgment which invariably arrested and held the attention of the House. As he never spoke "for Buncombe," never addressed the House without having something to the purpose to say,—something worth listening to,—as he never indulged in sharp criticisms or personal remarks, harbored no enmities, and had therefore no enemies, it was seldom that he addressed the Speaker or chairman of the committee of the whole without being promptly recognized.

Mr. Vinton was emphatically a useful member, seeming always to have a single eye to accomplishing that which the great interests of the country required at the hands of Congress, and always most industrious in maturing important measures and pushing them through Congress.* Very sedate and taciturn, he was, nevertheless, of bland and amiable deportment, and pleasant in conversation, though probably never guilty of a witty remark, or the perpetration of a joke, in his life. Earnest, sincere, and free from all asperity, even under the most trying circumstances, he was a general favorite, esteemed by political opponents as well as political friends; and, to sum up his character in a single word, he was eminently a *wise* man. His constituents honored themselves in electing him as their representative for many, many years,—till he voluntarily retired from public life, at the close of the Thirty-first Congress.

MR. CUSHING GOES TO CHINA.—MR. WEBSTER RETIRES FROM THE CABINET.

Had Mr. Everett accepted the mission to China,—a kind of nondescript, created by the act of 3d of March, 1843,—and vacated his mission to England, it is probable Mr. Webster would have been his successor. Not accepting, however, Mr. Cush-

* Mr. Vinton was the author of the law requiring members of Congress to be elected by districts.

ing was appointed, and took his departure in May, on board the war-steamer Missouri, at Washington, where she was brought to receive him. Threading her way down the crooked channel of the Potomac, she ran upon an oyster-bank, and fifteen of her crew, with a promising young officer, were drowned in getting her off. The ship was ordered to proceed to the Mediterranean, but, on arriving at Gibraltar, took fire and was consumed.

Mr. Cushing proceeded on his journey by way of the Red Sea and a steamer through the Indian Ocean to his destination, where he had his own troubles in getting a treaty out of the Celestials.

Mr. Webster's position in the cabinet had become uncomfortable. There was little in common between him and his colleagues, who had views they well knew he never would concur in, much less promote, and he therefore became isolated, in fact, in the way, and was made to feel that he was unwelcome at the council-board,—he was neither consulted nor regarded. Texas now loomed up at the South and filled the eye and fired the ambition of Mr. Tyler. What a glory to his administration the *re*-annexation of Texas would be! Tyler, Upshur, Wise, and Gilmer were all full of it. The scheme of annexation was privately and clandestinely carried on, and it must ere long become the subject of open official action; and as Mr. Webster could not be trusted, he must be got rid of. How? there was no mission to England to offer him,—nothing that he could honorably accept; and it would not do to dismiss him abruptly. What then? Why, compel him to resign out of sheer self-respect; make him feel that he was in the way; treat him coldly; never consult him, and pay little or no attention to what at any time he might propose or bring before the council-board; give him a cold shoulder and averted looks. This was the plan, and it proved effectual. He went at last, and was immediately succeeded, *ad interim*, by Mr. Legaré, of South Carolina, Attorney-General.

And so Mr. Webster finally, May, 1843, separated from John Tyler. But the Whigs were not disposed to open their doors to him: the latch-string was no longer out. He whom they and the whole country had admired now inspired them with a different

feeling; and he inquired, with real solicitude, "Where am I to go?"

The Fanueil Hall speech, and, above all, Mr. Webster's adhesion to Mr. Tyler long after the signing and ratification of the Webster-Ashburton treaty, were not forgotten, and the discarded Secretary met cold, if not averted, faces on his return home among his old enthusiastic friends. Still, there was at the bottom of the great Whig heart a kindly feeling for Daniel Webster. He had for years been one of the great champions of their cause, and, more than any other, the great expounder of constitutional doctrines held by them. They could not forget the conflict between him and Hayne in the Senate twelve years before; they could not forget his masterly speeches on the bank, on the removal of the deposits, on Executive usurpation, on the "spoils" doctrine, on the various vetoes of General Jackson, and on the Sub-treasury.

In turning his back upon them he had turned upon himself, and it required only time and reflection for him to see that he had veered from the straight path and gone astray; and when this was fully realized by him, he would not be long in finding his way back to the camp of his old friends. It was a favorable circumstance that he came back from Washington with a subdued spirit. No imperiousness marked his bearing, but rather the humility of the prodigal son. Still, no fatted calf was killed, nor did the Whigs espy him afar off and go out to meet him. He was given ample time for reflection. They could not forget that the party had been bereft of the fruits of that great victory won in 1840 by the death of Harrison and the treachery of John Tyler, sustained and countenanced by Daniel Webster.

MR. TYLER'S VISIT TO THE NORTH AND EAST.—MR. LEGARÉ'S DEATH.—MR. UPSHUR APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE.—INTRIGUE FOR TEXAS.

On the compulsory retirement of Mr. Webster, Mr. Legaré was appointed to discharge the duties of Secretary of State *ad interim;* and Mr. James M. Porter, of Pennsylvania, was appointed to the Secretaryship of War, made vacant by the appointment of Mr. Spencer as Secretary of the Treasury.

The President, accompanied by Mr. Legaré, proceeded on a tour North and East, as far as Boston, in June, 1843, receiving such demonstrations of respect as his few "peculiar friends" and the public at large thought proper to display, which in no place were highly flattering, and the absence of which in Baltimore and Philadelphia was, to him, painfully expressive.

He had hardly arrived at Boston when Mr. Legaré was taken ill, and died in a very short time. The President thereupon returned with all possible haste to Washington, and appointed Mr. Upshur, of Virginia, Secretary of State, and David Henshaw, of Massachusetts, a Democrat, Secretary of the Navy.

Meantime, Mr. Proffit was appointed and sent minister to Brazil; and thus all those who constituted "the corporal's guard," except Mr. Wise, had been provided for.

The great purpose of the administration was now the acquisition of Texas.

The South generally were not unfavorable to this, as it would give strength to the slave States as against the free States. Mr. Calhoun and his friends very ardently desired it.

An intrigue had been set on foot to operate on the people of the United States. A letter was published by Mr. Gilmer in a Baltimore paper warning the people against the machinations and designs of England, which were represented to be the gaining possession and ownership of this extensive territory for the purpose of supplying herself with cotton, and also with a view to the abolishing of slavery in the United States.

General Jackson was drawn into the writing of a letter in favor of immediately acquiring Texas. Colonel Benton says he was drawn into the intrigue, not knowing that Mr. Calhoun was its prime mover. It was believed by those engaged in this scheme that both Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren would oppose annexation, and that it could be made an issue in the approaching Presidential contest fatal to both these aspirants. The result proved their sagacity.

Mr. Calhoun was at one time considered as a rival of Mr. Van Buren for the Democratic nomination, but he never suffered himself to be announced as a candidate, and it had become apparent that he could not obtain the nomination.

MEETING OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.—SOLOMON FOOT, JACOB COLLAMER, HAMILTON FISH, E. JOY MORRIS, ALEXANDER RAMSEY, WASHINGTON HUNT, HANNIBAL HAMLIN, ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS, ROBERT TOOMBS, JOHN P. HALE, ROBERT C. SCHENCK, J. J. HARDIN, STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, HOWELL COBB, JOHN WENTWORTH, JAMES POLLOCK.

The Twenty-eighth Congress met, as customary, on the first Monday of December, and, as it was largely Democratic, there were many new as well as young members. It is a notable circumstance that many who have since played important parts in public life first became known to, or were heard of, by the nation as members of this Congress. Among these were Messrs. Foot and Collamer, of Vermont, for many years the very able representatives of that State in the Senate. Hamilton Fish, of New York, subsequently governor of that State, Senator in Congress, and now Secretary of State; Washington Hunt, afterwards governor of New York; E. Joy Morris and Alexander Ramsey, of Pennsylvania,—the former minister to Naples and Constantinople, and the latter governor of Minnesota and United States Senator; Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, Vice-President from March 4, 1861, to March 4, 1865, and now United States Senator; Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, a man of marked ability, who sought the Presidential chair with extraordinary avidity and perseverance, but sought it only to go down to the grave, like many other aspirants, without reaching the object of his high ambition. Tennessee sent another new member, who has since filled a large space in the public eye,—Andrew Johnson, afterwards United States Senator, elected in 1864 Vice-President on the ticket with Mr. Lincoln, and, by the assassination of the latter, President of the United States.

From Georgia came A. H. Stephens, whose great power as a popular speaker had been heralded in advance of his entrance into Congress, whose presence there was warmly welcomed by the Whigs, and whose personal appearance strongly reminded one of John Randolph of Roanoke. Like Randolph, his body was so attenuated that it seemed scarcely able to support his massive head. Though then thirty-one years of age, he scarcely looked to be over twenty, and his voice was that of one in

his teens. But if he lacked physical he was richly endowed with mental ability, and this at once placed him among, and made him the peer of, the most prominent members of the House.

Though an invalid all his life, and on his first entrance into Congress his life seemed to be held by a frail tenure, he "still lives," his body a mere wreck, but his mind clear and vigorous.

Since the breaking out of the Rebellion, Mr. Stephens has acted a prominent part, and attracted much attention from the public; but, though he held the second office under the Confederacy, the people of the North entertained, and still entertain, for him both respect and kindly feelings,—very different from those inspired by Jefferson Davis and thousands of the leading spirits of the Rebellion. His re-entrance into the House of Representatives at the commencement of the Forty-second Congress was a most striking incident, and it was gratifying to his old personal and political friends, among whom I count myself, to witness the universal respect paid to him by the members.

Mr. Stephens was in Congress for a long period, and his name always suggests that of another, who was on such terms of intimacy with him that they seemed to be the "Siamese twins," though his *alter ego*, Robert Toombs, did not enter Congress till two years after.

Howell Cobb, also from Georgia, now first entered upon his Congressional life, became Speaker of the Thirty-first Congress, and Secretary of the Treasury under Mr. Buchanan. John J. Hardin, of Illinois, who fell in the battle of Buena Vista, fighting desperately at the head of his regiment, also first entered the Twenty-eighth Congress, as did another from that State, remarkable, at least, for his great height, John Wentworth, usually called "Long John,"—a man of vigorous intellect, great energy, and a shrewd but independent politician. Robert C. Schenck, a new member in this Congress, from Ohio, has served many terms, but not continuously. During the Rebellion he held the office of major-general, and is now our able minister to England. He was distinguished in Congress by the keenness of his assaults upon his opponents, his sharp satire, and his quick

and telling retorts when he was himself assailed. He could fire off-hand at game upon the wing, and never failed to fix his dart in the object aimed at, where it rankled and festered: he was a most effectual skirmisher in a running and somewhat excited debate.

Governor James Pollock, of Pennsylvania, also entered the Twenty-eighth Congress as a new member, and, like those I have mentioned, has filled high positions since, having been governor of the State,—after having served two terms in Congress,—and has for several years past been at the head of the mint in Philadelphia.

Edward Joy Morris, of Philadelphia, who first entered the Twenty-eighth Congress, was also a member of the Thirty-fifth, having in the mean time been minister to Naples during the Taylor-Fillmore administration; and during the administrations of Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Johnson he was minister to Constantinople, discharging his diplomatic duties with high credit to himself and to the United States.

Nor should another gentleman, who first entered upon his Congressional career in 1843, be forgotten. Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, was a very able debater and popular orator,—excelled by few, either in ability or in fluency or force of language. He soon took rank among the leaders of his party (Whig), and performed a great amount of labor upon "the stump" in every part of the United States. He became Secretary of the Interior under Mr. Lincoln, and died while holding that office.

John P. Hale, who has lately passed away, now first appeared in Congress as a Democrat; after which time his life was an eventful one. He was a fluent speaker; his remarks, never caustic, were usually well seasoned with wit and pleasantry, always leaving a favorable impression upon his audience. He was gifted with a remarkably fine, powerful voice, and could be distinctly heard, even in his ordinary tone, in every part of the old hall of the House, so difficult to speak in. It used to be said of him, jocosely, that it was his custom to stand upon the tóp of Mount Washington and address the whole State of New Hampshire at the same time, only those within a few

miles of him suffering inconvenience from the extraordinary strength of his lungs.

Mr. Hale went with his party until required to vote for the annexation of Texas. There were some dozen or more Democrats in the House who had declared that nothing should tempt or force them to vote for annexation; but when the time and the vote came, every man of them save two—John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, and Richard Davis, of New York—succumbed to the power and mandate of the party, and voted with it. Not so the two members mentioned, who became contumacious and rebellious, voting in the negative with the Whigs, and were consequently excommunicated and anathematized. It was the end of Mr. Davis's career in Congress; but Mr. Hale went home, took "the stump," addressed the people of the State, and was sustained,—from that time not joining the Whigs, but calling himself a free-soiler, and being called an "Abolitionist." He was not re-elected to the Twenty-ninth Congress, but took his seat as a United States Senator in the Thirtieth, where he served for many years,—until he was appointed, by Mr. Lincoln, minister to Spain. During the Thirtieth Congress he was the only open, avowed Abolitionist in the Senate, and was consequently the target at which many a shaft was hurled, sometimes dipped in venom; yet his extreme good nature and amiable disposition were never disturbed; no harsh word ever escaped him, no anger ever excited; and for those who thus assailed him he was as ready to do an act of kindness as if they had never hurled their barbed shafts at him.

Ex-Governor and ex-Senator Henry S. Foote has, in his "Reminiscences of the Past," related a pleasant anecdote which does honor to both himself and Mr. Hale, and so illustrates the latter's kindness of heart that I take pleasure in copying it. Governor Foote relates that early in the summer of 1848 a number of slaves, some of them belonging to members of Congress, escaped, and were supposed to have gone north into the free States; that this produced great excitement among Southern members, and on entering the Senate the morning after, he found Mr. Calhoun upon the floor, denouncing with fervid vehemence of tone and manner, very unusual to him,

what he depicted as a fearful outrage upon the whole body of Southern slaveholders. On closing his remarks, Mr. Foote says he came to his seat and made a strong appeal to him to come forward in this matter in sustainment of the South, and to his, Mr. Calhoun's, relief. Governor Foote goes on to say, in a very candid manner, that "this was an appeal which I found it almost impossible to resist. . . .

"Waiting a few minutes for that Boanerges of debate, John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, to close a most stormy and indignant harangue, in which his facility in the application of potential and striking epithets had been fully displayed, I leaped to my feet and made, as I must frankly confess, under the overwhelming excitement of the moment, one of the most fumy, rabid, and insulting speeches that has ever dishonored a grave and dignified parliamentary body; in which I told Mr. Hale, in plain terms, that were he to visit any thickly-settled vicinage in Mississippi, and there use such language as that which he had just uttered, I did not at all doubt that he would incur the hazard of being strung up on one of the loftiest trees of the forest; and that in such case, should there be any want of a willing executioner, I would myself turn hangman for his benefit. These frantic and indecent words had scarcely been enunciated ere I became painfully sensible of the stupid and unbecoming nature of my conduct, and I would have really given worlds to recall all the nonsense I had uttered.

"In less than forty-eight hours I received hundreds of anonymous letters, filled with the most caustic revilement, and others inclosing the most hideous caricatures of a person whom these same caricatures denominated 'Hangman Foote.' I positively writhed in agony. Never had my self-respect suffered such humiliation. I felt that the fabled shirt of Nessus was actually enveloping my limbs. Meanwhile, the jolly and kind-hearted Senator from New Hampshire and myself had long since gotten on good terms, and I had even taken a decided liking for him on account of his genial disposition, his natural amiableness of temper, and his sparkling vivacity, either in debate or in conversation. One morning, a month or two after the scene which has been just narrated, Mr. Hale came

to my seat and told me he had a favor to ask of me, which he could not doubt that I would grant: That there was a young man of his acquaintance, a native of New Hampshire, who had been prosecuted for forgery, or some kindred offense, who, having been convicted, was then in jail. He said that the prosecution had taken place under Federal jurisdiction, and that the culprit would have to depend upon the clemency of the President of the United States for pardon. 'Now,' said he, 'you are, I know, on most intimate terms with the Secretary of the Treasury, Robert J. Walker, who will, I am sure, recommend this young man for pardon on your request.' He added, that though he could not doubt that the young man referred to was guilty as charged, yet he was satisfied that there were extenuating circumstances in the case; that the offender was of very tender years and of a highly-respectable connection; and he then closed by informing me that his sister, a young, pure-minded, and affectionate girl, had come all the way from New England, hoping to carry back with her to the bosom of his family her erring but much-loved brother. . . . I promptly undertook the mission suggested. Proceeding at once to Mr. Walker and the President, I found no difficulty in obtaining the pardon asked for, and returned to the Capitol in less than two hours from the time I had set out on this errand of mercy. On placing the pardon in the hands of Mr. Hale, he introduced me to the young lady, who was indeed overpowered with the good tidings which I had brought. He then turned to her and said, in his own characteristic way, 'Young lady, this is a gentleman of whom you have often heard in New England. He is one of the Senators from Mississippi. To him alone are you indebted for the liberation of your brother. When you get home again, be sure to tell your friends and neighbors there never again to call him "Hangman Foote."' However generous may have been Mr. Hale's intentions in this regard, I am constrained to acknowledge that I have often since had proof that this euphonious and impressive *sobriquet* has not yet ceased to vibrate upon the lips of many among the excellent descendants of the time-honored Pilgrims."

At the time Mr. Hale voted against annexation it had become a party measure. Before the meeting of the Baltimore Convention, which threw Mr. Van Buren overboard and nominated Mr. Polk, the reverse was the party doctrine at the North. The Northern Democrats then declared that there were not two sides to that question; that they were as much opposed to annexation as the Whigs, who need not think to make capital by opposing that measure. But after the nomination of Mr. Polk the tune was changed, and those who had so vehemently opposed it were—all but a few—compelled to go for it. In New York, some of the special friends of Mr. Van Buren resorted to the plan of issuing a secret circular, which was sent to some hundred leading Democrats of that State, of the "Barnburner" wing, the purport of which was that, while *the party* must strenuously oppose annexation, there must be no division in the ranks; but in all cases efforts must be made in primary conventions to select candidates eminent for ability and known hostility to the acquisition of Texas. Though secretly issued, it was ere long made public. It was signed by George P. Barker, of Buffalo, William Cullen Bryant and John A. Dix, of New York City, Azariah C. Flagg, of Albany, and several other leading Democrats of that State, called "Barnburners." This adroit manœuvre was one of the principal causes of the election of Silas Wright as governor, and the carrying the State for Polk. I have, in another place, shown how a majority was obtained in the Senate in favor of annexation, and how Mr. Dix, Mr. Tappan, Colonel Benton, Mr. Fairfield, and one other Senator, were entrapped into voting as they did. I return to Mr. Hale.

I have often seen him assailed in the Senate, somewhat in the style in which Governor Foote acknowledges he assailed him, and heard his replies, which were always calm, temperate, and entirely free from asperity. When reviled, he reviled not again, and showed how true it is that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." He disarmed his assailants by his imperturbable good nature and wise forbearance. I say *forbearance*, for it was in his power to say as sharp and irritating things as those he replied to: these assailants, in the end, probably

became ashamed of hurling missiles at one who never cast any back. Mr. Hale was ably supported after the close of the Thirty-first Congress by Senators Chase, Sumner, Seward, and Wade,—Mr. Seward entering the Thirty-first Congress, and Messrs Chase, Sumner, and Wade the Thirty-second. Of these only Mr. Wade survives.

MR. WEBSTER'S READMISSION INTO THE WHIG CHURCH: HOW IT WAS DONE.

On the 9th of January, 1844, late at night, I closed one of my letters by saying, "Mr. Webster, I am glad to know, is renewing his friendly relations with his old associates, and is Mr. Webster of old again. *He* will understand me when I say this has been a white-pebble evening to him." This requires explanation.

I have before said that the Whig doors were closed to Mr. Webster, and the latch-string drawn in. He came to Washington early in the season, having important cases to argue before the Supreme Court, the most important being the Girard Will Case. Few or none of the prominent Whigs called on him. He felt the neglect: he was uncomfortably isolated. His faithful and devoted friend, Mr. Choate, saw this, and felt it as much, perhaps, as Mr. Webster himself. What could be done? He took occasion to see Judge Mangum, Mr. Simmons, of Rhode Island, Mr. Morehead, of Kentucky, and others, and urged a reconciliation, which was finally agreed to. But how was it to be done? On an occasion of that kind—the return of the prodigal son—there must be feasting. Who should make the feast? Not Mr. Webster, for the Whigs would not attend.

It so happened that Mr. Botts had presented Judge Mangum with a very superior saddle of Southdown mutton, of his own raising, and Judge Mangum had proposed to give a dinner, that friends might partake of the mutton. Upon consulting Mr. Botts and others who were to be the invited guests, it was arranged that Mr. Webster should be invited, and that there the reconciliation should be consummated over a feast.

The dinner took place on the evening of the 9th of January,

and a pleasant one it was. The guests were Mr. Webster, Mr. Botts, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Simmons, Mr. Archer, Mr. Morehead, Mr. Choate, Colonel Seaton, and the writer hereof, making, including the host, nine persons.

The intercourse between Mr. Webster and the other guests, except Mr. Choate and Colonel Seaton, was at first by no means cordial; but Mr. Webster made himself as agreeable as possible, seemed to take pains to conciliate his old friends and restore old feelings, drank wine with each, and, finally, as the night wore away and the bottle circulated, cold obstructions wore away, and hearts were warmed into genial conviviality. The saddle of mutton was fit for a company of emperors, and received fitting praise from every one; two better judges of the article than Mr. Webster and Colonel Seaton probably could not be found on the continent. And so Mr. Webster became once more a *Whig* in full communion with, and good standing in, the party.

Sad reflection! of that distinguished party not one survives except myself. I am the only living individual who knows how Mr. Webster was feasted—not upon a fatted calf, but upon the fattest of mutton—on the occasion of his return to his old associates.

JUDGE WILLIE P. MANGUM.

Judge Mangum was at this time President of the Senate,—a position he had occupied since the death of Mr. Southard; a position of more importance than usual now, as in case of the death of the President—an event which came near happening when Upshur, Gilmer, and others were killed on the Princeton—he would succeed to the Presidency. He had had a long Congressional career, having entered the House of Representatives when barely eligible, and coming from a State—North Carolina—which did not, without a good reason, change her delegation in Congress. He had a high sense of what the Senate of the United States should be, his model being "the Senate" as he saw it when he first came to Congress, and he strove hard to keep up its dignity and the gentlemanly courteousness of its members. There was then no previous question known in that body, by which debate could be arrested and

cut short; no one-hour rule to restrain long speeches; all was left to the sense of propriety of Senators,—a privilege rarely, either then or now, abused. Mr. Mangum was a believer in the effect of dress upon the dignity of the Senate, and insisted upon every Senator appearing in what was styled a Senatorial costume. There is no "Senatorial costume" now.

He had so long been a part of the national government that he had become a thoroughly national man. He entertained broad and liberal views; was governed by no narrow sectional feelings in making appropriations for national purposes, such as the improvement of rivers and harbors, the improvement of the national capital, the increase of the navy, for West Point, and the like. His great desire was to see the United States become a great and powerful *nation*, respected at home and commanding the respect of foreign powers; and as one of the means to this end he wished that the first office of the government should be filled by no second- or third-rate statesman; and when it was so filled, he looked upon the event as indicating that no man not possessed of other qualifications for the office than statesmanship, and who had not the "hurrah popularity," could ever again be elected President. He was a warm friend of Mr. Clay, by whom he was much esteemed and frequently consulted. Eminently social, he enjoyed the company of friends, and by his pleasant humor attracted them around him. Unfortunately, his genial conviviality was too frequently indulged, and led to what his friends deeply deplored. He could counsel others against a too free indulgence of the Circean cup, but could not restrain himself. He was at one time looked upon as a probable candidate of the Whig party, after Mr. Clay, for President, and few men could fill that high office with more dignity and ability before he became a slave to the tempting cup. In his early Congressional career he "messed" at "Dawson's No. 2," Capitol Hill, several sessions, with John Randolph, Nathaniel Mason, Mr. Newton, of Virginia, and others of that stamp, and learned much from their conversation of the "public men and events" of the earlier days of the republic; and, as I "messed" with him one long session, I learned much of those early times from him,—interesting unwritten history. He lived

to see the commencement of the Rebellion which he so much deprecated, but not its terrible devastations and close.

THE GIRARD WILL CASE.

One of the most important cases that ever came before the Supreme Court at Washington, and in which a more imposing array of counsel never appeared, was now to be argued. The case involved the legality of Stephen Girard's will, and especially his bequest of funds to establish and carry on the Girard College for orphan boys. The heirs sought to abrogate the will and obtain the funds set apart for the college. If they could succeed, the excellent and benevolent institution in which so many orphans were to find a home and be fitted for the active duties of life would be broken up, the humane intentions of the donor frustrated, and the beautiful marble building or buildings left to stand as monuments of the cupidity and heartlessness of the heirs of him for whose wishes they had no sort of regard. The ground taken by Mr. Webster for them was, that no school which excludes the teaching of religion could be a *charity*.

The counsel for the heirs were Mr. Schley, Mr. Walter Jones, and Mr. Webster; the opposing counsel, Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Binney: all men of the highest national reputation as jurists, and of transcendent abilities. The importance of the case, and the fame of the counsel engaged, packed the court-room daily.

Each of these five great lawyers had had ample time to prepare himself for the contest now on hand. Mr. Sergeant was the original counsel of the city of Philadelphia, defendant in the case, and had gained it before the court below. But when it was carried up to the Supreme Court, Mr. Binney was joined with him at his request, and went to England to make himself more familiar with the law of charitable uses. Mr. Binney never did his work by halves, and he well availed himself of all the facilities cheerfully accorded him by the high legal dignitaries of that country. He returned fully prepared for the encounter.

Mr. Binney was tall, large, well formed, always well dressed,

and an Apollo in manly beauty. He spoke slowly and distinctly; his voice was full, musical, and well modulated; his manners a blending of dignity, ease, suavity, and high refinement. As he stood before the court he was a very model of a lawyer and gentleman. He was a graceful, easy, interesting speaker, earnest at times, but never boisterous or vehement, and his language the purest classic Anglo-Saxon. No slang, or low phrases, or expressions not conformable to a refined taste, ever passed his lips. He spoke three days, during which the court-room was filled to its utmost capacity by beauty, talent, and eminence. It was the point of attraction not only of the Capitol, but of the city; and lawyers of eminent abilities were drawn to it from Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, to listen to the great law arguments of the learned counsel. Mr. Binney came here with a reputation which any man might envy; he returned with increased fame.

Mr. Sergeant made the closing argument for the defendants. He was a lawyer of no less ability, learning, and eminence than Mr. Binney; but he had not his fine voice or imposing appearance. His voice was weak, his stature and body small, but his head large,—almost out of proportion to his body. He spoke two days, and, notwithstanding his natural defects as an orator, fully kept up the interest in the case, and more than maintained his reputation as a lawyer. Able as Mr. Webster was as a jurist, like Mr. Clay, he was more of a statesman than a jurist. The Senate was the great theatre of his glory; Mr. Binney, Mr. Sergeant, and Mr. Jones were each his superior in legal knowledge and acumen.

Mr. Webster, who made the closing argument in the case, had a Herculean task to perform to answer the legal arguments of the opposing counsel, and, furthermore, to convince the court that "the plan of education for the Girard school of orphans was derogatory to the Christian religion, contrary to sound morals, and subversive of law." It was in the hands of a Hercules, and if any one could do it he could; but it was beyond his power. He occupied the court for three days, the room the whole time being densely crowded. A portion of his address partook more of the character of a discourse upon

religion and charity than of a legal argument; it was an episode entirely distinct from law or argument: it was a beautiful and impressive dissertation, but very little applicable to the case before the court.

The Supreme Court affirmed the decree of the Circuit Court of Pennsylvania, dismissing the bill of the plaintiffs. The opinion, which was an elaborate one, was delivered by Mr. Justice Story, who spoke of the cause as having been "argued with great learning and ability."

Mr. Sergeant and Mr. Binney,—Mr. Binney and Mr. Sergeant,—these names were inseparably connected in the mind of every Philadelphian. The mention of one suggested the name of the other. They commenced life together; were students of law in the office of Mr. Jared Ingersoll, a very distinguished lawyer in Philadelphia; began their professional life at the same time; and both took up their residences adjoining each other in South Fourth Street, where they continued to live during their joint lives, and where the survivor, Mr. Binney, still lives, at a very advanced age, having outlived all his cotemporaries, an object always of the highest respect, and now of profound veneration. Both had offices adjoining their houses. Between them a warm and uninterrupted friendship existed so long as they both lived, and when Mr. Sergeant was removed by death, breaking the sacred tie which had so long and so closely bound them together, the survivor pronounced a eulogy over his deceased brother, dictated by affectionate friendship and heartfelt grief, justly pronounced "a gem of eulogistic composition." It far surpasses, in truthful simplicity, depth of feeling, beauty of language, glowing warmth of the heart which comes welling up with the words, and in the sincerity of the sadness expressed, the celebrated eulogy of Tacitus on his father-in-law, Agricola. Mr. Binney paid this tribute to his departed friend before the Association of the Bar of Philadelphia, many of the members of which had been associated with Mr. Sergeant, as brethren of the same bar, nearly all his professional life, and whose hearts now beat responsive to the sad words of the eulogist.

Upon closing his remarks, Mr. Binney took a mournful leave

of his brethren of the bar, it being the last time he should ever appear before them on a similar or any other occasion. He had some time previously addressed them, on the occasion of the death of that pure, upright, model gentleman and lawyer, Charles Chauncey, who, like Mr. Sergeant, was his cotemporary; no other was now left to whose memory he could be called upon to pay a similar tribute of affection and respect. All his cotemporaries had gone to their rest, and he might reasonably expect that he should very soon follow his life-long friend. The occasion was a mournful one to him. Announcing to the bar that this was his last appearance before them, and bidding them an affectionate farewell, he departed, leaving his audience saddened even to tears. Many then present have since passed away,—Dallas, Scott, Ingersoll, Meredith, and others, who will long be remembered.

CABINET CHANGES.

The Senate having almost unanimously rejected the nominations of James M. Porter as Secretary of War, and of David Henshaw as Secretary of the Navy, the President now nominated William Wilkins, of Pennsylvania, as Secretary of War, and Thomas W. Gilmer, of Virginia, as Secretary of the Navy. Both nominations were immediately confirmed.

John Nelson, of Maryland, was also nominated and confirmed as Attorney-General.

Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, nominated as head of the Bureau of Clothing and Provisions, was rejected by the Senate.

A vacancy on the bench of the Supreme Court, occasioned by the death of Mr. Justice Baldwin, Mr. Tyler proposed to fill, first by nominating Mr. Sergeant; but the nomination being declined by him was next offered to Mr. Binney, who also declined it: so states Mr. Wise, who acted for the President.

A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE.—BURSTING OF A GUN ON THE WAR-STEAMER PRINCETON.

Near the close of Congress, February 28, 1844, a large and distinguished party, including the President, Cabinet ministers,

Senators, Representatives in Congress, and strangers of distinction, about a hundred persons, including many ladies, among whom was Mrs. Madison, was invited by Captain Stockton, of the navy, and commander of the United States war-steamer Princeton, then lying in the Potomac, to witness the working of her screw-propeller, and the firing of her big gun, "Peacemaker," made of wrought iron,—a conception of Captain Stockton's, of which he was very proud.

The vessel had been built under Captain Stockton's own eye, and the enormous gun,—enormous for those days,—which carried a ball weighing two hundred and twenty-five pounds, was an invention of his own, and constructed also under his supervision.

Captain Stockton, proud of his vessel and her great screw-propeller, and especially proud of his mammoth wrought-iron gun, had brought her to Washington to show what he had accomplished. There was no better mode of doing this than to invite a party of distinguished men,—the President and the chief officers of the government, and their families, to make an excursion upon her down the Potomac. The day fixed proved to be pleasant; the company assembled, very distinguished, in fine humor, gay, and hilarious, and the master-spirit of the occasion, Commodore Stockton, was in most exuberant spirits. Miss Gardner, whom the President a few months after married, was by no means the least happy and agreeable person of the company.

The Princeton steamed down the river, below Mount Vernon, and then put about. Her machinery worked admirably, the Marine Band on board discoursed sweet music, and the smaller guns were frequently fired, disturbing the tritons, if any there were, and keeping up a joyous roar, which was re-echoed from the distant hills.

A sumptuous collation had been set out and partaken of, when, about four o'clock, word was passed down to the company that the great gun was to be fired, and those who wished to witness it must come on deck. Immediately the gentlemen hurried up; but Mr. Tyler was called back while ascending the steps, for some playful purpose, by his lady-love, and Mr.

Seaton, who, with his charming wife, was among the guests, was detained by not finding his hat, and before the two gentlemen could get on deck, the gun was fired and exploded. The report of the explosion was deafening, and created great alarm among the ladies below.

Commodore Stockton, Thomas W. Gilmer, Secretary of the Navy, and Commodore Kennon had stationed themselves on the side of and near the gun; Mr. Virgil H. Maxcy and Mr. Gardner, the father of the subsequent Mrs. Tyler, stood upon the other side of the gun; Colonel Benton in the rear, where he could watch the course of the ball; and Secretary Upshur, who seemed to be the only one who apprehended danger, took a position behind the mast. Mr. Senator Phelps stood near, but in the rear of the gun. As the smoke blew away, a shocking spectacle presented itself. Mr. Gilmer and Mr. Upshur were killed by being struck by fragments of the gun; Commodore Kennon, Mr. Maxcy, and Mr. Gardner, by the concussion of the explosion; and Commodore Stockton, Colonel Benton, and Senator Phelps were all laid prostrate upon the deck, and, for a time, deprived of consciousness.

Mrs. Gilmer, and the wives and daughters of some of the other victims, were on board, and their feelings can more easily be imagined than described. The brilliant company, but a few minutes before so hilarious and happy, now grief-stricken and benumbed by the terrible catastrophe, mournfully returned, with the bodies of their dead companions, friends, and relatives, to the city they had left a few hours before in such exhilarating spirits. The news flew apace over the city, and created the most intense sensation. The catastrophe was so sudden, so appalling, so many had been stricken instantly down, that it seemed almost impossible to realize the awful facts.

It was the fourth time the gun had been fired; the company, not knowing it was to be fired, were nearly all below, taking refreshments. This was most providential, for otherwise the crowd on deck would have been very great, and the loss of life must have been proportionate. Some of the persons killed were much mutilated, especially Commodore Kennon, who was struck in the head, face, and breast by pieces of the gun. Mr.

Upshur was struck in the head and breast, and Mr. Gilmer in the head. Colonel Gardner had both legs torn off, and Mr. Maxcy an arm. Mr. Pleasanton lost a piece of his ear by a piece of the gun striking it,—a narrow escape from death.

The President announced to Congress the next day the death of Mr. Upshur and of Mr. Gilmer in suitable terms, and the two Houses, adopting appropriate resolutions, adjourned. One of the resolutions provided for the appointment of a committee of five on the part of the House, and an equal number by the Senate, to make arrangements for the funeral of Mr. Upshur and Mr. Gilmer, which took place from the President's mansion.

But the shocking tragedy spread a gloom over the city which could not be immediately dispelled. The novel gun which was brought here to show that wrought-iron guns of great calibre could be successfully constructed and used in the navy was never heard of more. The experiment proved that such ordnance was more destructive to those who used it than to an enemy.

FURTHER ORGANIZATION OF THE CABINET.—MR. CALHOUN SECRETARY OF STATE.—TEXAS MOVEMENTS.

Mr. Calhoun was nominated and confirmed as Secretary of State, in the place of Mr. Upshur, killed, and Mr. Wise, in his "Seven Decades of the Union," has given an account of how it was accomplished. He did it himself, and in a way peculiarly his own. He says, "Mr. Webster remained in the cabinet until the Northeastern question was settled, and as long as Upshur or Legaré was alive, the Southwestern question was in safe Southern hands; but now that they were both taken away, there was one man left who was necessary above all others to the South in settling and obtaining the annexation of Texas. We need not say that man was John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina."

Mr. Wise relates how he induced Mr. Tyler, against his own feelings, to nominate Mr. Calhoun; but it is of little moment *how* it was done, since it was done; and Mr. Calhoun proved true to the purpose for which he was selected. We must now

say that it was well for the country that the purpose was accomplished, though at that time a large portion of the people were most decidedly opposed to it.

The cabinet was further reorganized by the appointment of John Y. Mason, of Virginia, Secretary of the Navy, in the place of Mr. Gilmer, killed on the Princeton, and Charles A. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, Postmaster-General.

The nomination of Mr. Calhoun as Secretary of State, and his acceptance of the position, left the field apparently clear for Mr. Van Buren, and his friends did not entertain a shadow of a doubt that he would be nominated as the Democratic candidate for President.

Incipient steps had been taken by Mr. Upshur, before his death, to acquire Texas by negotiation and treaty; and Mr. Gilmer had been appointed Secretary of the Navy to promote this object. How Mr. Van Buren was approached on the subject of annexation I shall leave Colonel Benton, his confidential friend, to relate.

"The time had now come," says Colonel Benton, "for the interrogation of the candidates, and it was done with all the tact which the delicate function required. The choice of the interrogator was the first point. He must be a friend, ostensible, if not real, to the party interrogated. If real, he must himself be deceived, and made to believe that he was performing a friendly service; if not, he must still have the appearance. And for Mr. Van Buren's benefit a suitable performer was found in the person of Mr. Hamett, a representative in Congress from Mississippi, whose letter was a model for the occasion. It abounded in professions of friendship to Mr. Van Buren,—approached him for his own good, sought his opinion from the best motives, and urged a categorical reply for or against immediate annexation. The sagacious Mr. Van Buren was no dupe to this contrivance, but took counsel from what was due to himself, and answered with candor, decorum, and dignity. He was against immediate annexation, because it was war with Mexico, but for it when it could be done peaceably and honorably."

Mr. Calhoun, now so earnest for obtaining Texas, as one of

Mr. Monroe's cabinet, in 1819, voted to give it away, while Mr. Adams strenuously advocated retaining it, and Mr. Clay, who was opposed to the loss of this province at that time, offered resolutions in the House of Representatives, and supported them in an ardent speech, in which he condemned that part of the treaty of 1819 which surrendered it. As Secretary of State, under Mr. Adams, he had advised the recovery of the province, and opened negotiations with Mexico to that effect. He was also interrogated in regard to the acquisition of Texas, and answered that, although an ancient friend to the recovery of the country, he was opposed to its immediate annexation, which was war with Mexico. In his reply he stated that it had already been his duty to act officially on two several occasions, but in different forms, upon the subject of Texas,—alluding to his action in the House of Representatives in 1819, and his opening negotiations with Mexico, as above stated.

There were other aspirants for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, who were interrogated in regard to annexation, but, Colonel Benton says, "Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren were the only candidates who answered like *statesmen*, and they were both distanced."

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS AND CAMPAIGN.

Mr. Clay started from his residence in Kentucky, in February, on a Southern tour; properly an electioneering tour. Passing down the river to Mississippi, he went through that State, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, arriving in Washington the latter part of April.

An amusing circumstance occurred while Mr. Clay was passing from Vicksburg to Jackson, Mississippi. He was in a railroad-car, with many friends around him, all in high glee, full of life, hope, and *spirits*. On another car of the same train was a Democrat, whom a friend accosted and invited to go into the next car and see Mr. Clay. No, he would do no such thing: he did not want to see such a —— Bank Whig as Henry Clay. "But," said his friend, "you will find him a

first-rate, pleasant man." No: he would not be seen shaking hands with Henry Clay.

"Well," said his friend, "your favorite, Mr. Van Buren, has shaken hands with him very often, and, more than that, visited him at his house."

"Never!" replied the Democrat, earnestly. "He never would do such a mean thing."

"But he did," replied his friend; "visited him at Ashland."

The Democrat could not believe it, but finally, after making a bet that Mr. Van Buren did not visit Mr. Clay, he agreed to leave it to Mr. Clay himself to decide the bet, as he said he did not think he would lie about it.

Accordingly, they entered the car where Mr. Clay was, and stated the case to him. "Oh, yes," said Mr. Clay; "I had a very pleasant visit from Mr. Van Buren, who spent two days with me at my house, and I should be very glad to return his visit if it were in my power, for, setting his bad politics aside, he is a very agreeable gentleman and right clever little fellow."

The Democrat looked confounded, but paid the bet, saying, at the same time, that if that was the way the great men they were battling for carried on the war with one another, they might do their own fighting hereafter, for he would not do it for them. He didn't believe they were in earnest anyhow, —only pretended to be, so as to set others by the ears. He had got one lesson, he said, that he should remember. As to Mr. Clay, towards whom he had always entertained such hostile feelings, he admitted that he was a —— clever gentleman, with neither horns nor hoofs, as he had been represented.

Mr. Clay used to tell this anecdote with much humor and evident gratification. He was fond of relating such incidents in his life, and had a store of them in the chambers of his memory.

No important measures were matured in Congress during the session, though there were debates in the Senate on the Texas and Oregon question and on the tariff question. In the House, the speeches were mostly of a violent partisan character, made for home consumption and campaign documents. There was a

superabundance of party animosity manifested, yet occasionally a little waggery was played off, to the amusement of the House. Members were sometimes made to laugh even at themselves. As an instance: General Jackson's letter to Dr. Coleman, in which he expressed the strongest kind of protection sentiments, must be well remembered, as also the use made of it at the North in 1828. Now, Mr. J. P. Kennedy, of Baltimore, had not forgotten this letter, and, bent on having a little fun, embodied it in a resolution which he presented to the House. The Democrats were taken aback. To vote down General Jackson's sentiments so deliberately expressed would never do; and to pass the resolution would be stultifying themselves. And so they squirmed and tried various expedients to dodge it; but all in vain. The Whigs enjoyed their dilemma, and had their laugh.

TREATY OF ANNEXATION.

A treaty of annexation had been negotiated between the government of the United States and that of Texas, by which that republic was to be annexed to, and become a part of, the United States. The treaty was sent to the Senate, where it met with powerful opposition and underwent thorough debate. Among the most determined of its opponents, and the most industrious in gathering up material to fortify his arguments, was Colonel Benton. He looked upon this Texas movement as an intrigue gotten up for the purpose of defeating his friend Mr. Van Buren and at the same time to benefit Mr. Calhoun. The treaty was rejected by the Senate.

THE WHIG NATIONAL CONVENTION AT BALTIMORE, MAY, 1844.

The National Whig Convention of 1844,—what a flood of memories that name calls up! What a host of noble spirits then and there present—active participants—have passed away! Sadly pleasant are the memories that cluster around their names and doings. How few of those who then met, joined hands, and mingled hearts, are now left! Webster, Judge Spencer, Clayton, Berrien, Leigh, Ewing, Burnett, Granger, Lawrence, Crittenden, Saltonstall, Evans, Governor Metcalf, Botts, Hardin, Erastus Root, Dawson, Morehead, McKennan, Lumpkin, and

many other leading spirits,—where are they? The places which knew them once know them no more. They have gone with the great leader whom they were proud to follow. Of that splendid galaxy of eminent men who figured prominently on that occasion—twenty-eight years ago—I know of but seven now living: Reverdy Johnson, of Baltimore, W. H. Seward,* of New York, A. H. H. Stuart, of Virginia, Richard W. Thompson, of Indiana, Millard Fillmore,* of New York, James Lyons, of Richmond, and Robert C. Schenck, of Ohio. There may be others; but, if so, I do not know the fact.

There were two conventions: the nominating convention, which met on the first day of May, and the ratifying convention, which met the next day.

The nominating convention met and unanimously elected the venerable Chief-Justice Spencer, of New York, father of John C., its president, and a vice-president from each State in the Union. There was no necessity to ballot for a candidate for President. As soon as the convention was organized, Benjamin Watkins Leigh, of Virginia, rose and offered a resolution declaring Henry Clay to be the candidate of the Whigs of the United States. No vote on this was necessary; the whole assembly rose and rent the air with reiterated shouts.

At an early hour the various delegations were forming, preparatory to marching to the field at Canton, where the convention of 1840 was held, and at ten o'clock the grand procession began to move.

The appearance of the immense line was grand and imposing. Stretching away in each direction as far as the eye could reach was a dense mass of men, with banners and flags at short intervals, waving and moving, giving life and animation to the scene; and, to add still more to the life and animation of this portion of the scene, bands of music, at short intervals, poured forth enlivening strains.

The convention was organized by appointing the Honorable John M. Clayton president, and a large number of vice-presidents and secretaries. Judge Spencer, the president of the nominating convention, then came forward, and, with a few

* Since dead.

appropriate remarks, reported the action of the body over which he had presided.

It was not known up to this time whether Mr. Webster would attend this convention and unite cordially with the Whigs or not; but he had arrived in the city the night before, and now appeared, and was conducted to the stand amid great cheering. Upon being loudly called for, he came forward and addressed the multitude below—who formed a sea of heads, standing as they did, as close as it was possible to pack them, for a great distance back, and on each side—in a full clear tone, and in a true WHIG speech; one that went home to the heart of every Whig who heard it. It came up to the mark; there was nothing kept back; no qualifying, no halting, no hesitancy. He spoke of Mr. Clay as he spoke of him in 1832, and as one great American statesman should speak of another with whom he had been so long a co-laborer.

Mr. Webster spoke of the service of Mr. Clay in the cause of his country: he had served his country, he said, more than thirty years, faithfully, honorably, and usefully, at home and abroad, and he rejoiced that in presenting his name to the country as a candidate for the Presidency there had been such clear indications of unanimity that there had not been a single voice raised in the negative, nor a doubtful response.

This brought forth the most enthusiastic cheers. Mr. Webster said that on various questions he and Mr. Clay had differed, both with equal honesty maintaining his own opinion; *but there was no question now before the country of public policy upon which there was* ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THAT GREAT LEADER OF THE WHIG PARTY. (Tremendous cheering.) Mr. Webster again emphatically declared himself a WHIG, and that there was no more doubt of his disposition to sustain those great measures which promote the interests of the country than there was of his duty. This was understood as a farewell shot at Mr. Tyler,—a Parthian arrow.

As Mr. Webster closed, he was greeted with frequent rounds of applause, and, on coming from the stand, was met and shaken by the hand by many of the prominent men on the platform.

So ended the memorable day. And to that day and its scenes,

and the eminent men congregated there, my memory delights to revert, to enjoy them all again and again. Sad pleasure; for

"These our actors

* * * * * * * *

Are melted into air, into thin air;
The mighty hosts, the gorgeous banners,
The waving flags, the rolling drums, the blaring trumpets,
Yea, all the pomp and circumstance of this substantial pageant,
Hath dissolved, leaving not a rack behind."

The multitude separated, few of them, comparatively, ever to meet or see one another again.

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.

As the day for holding the Democratic convention for nominating a candidate for President, the 27th of May, approached, the conflict between the Van Buren and the Calhoun sections became more and more sharp and bitter. Mr. Van Buren and his friends were not blind to the efforts made by Mr. Calhoun's friends to defeat his nomination, on the ground that he had declared himself opposed to the immediate annexation of Texas. Hostilities were carried on through the "Globe" on the one side, and the "Richmond Enquirer" and "Washington Spectator" on the other. Mr. Calhoun's friends in Virginia issued an address, in which they charged the "Globe" with making a wanton and unjust assault upon Mr. Calhoun, and with resorting to degrading means to injure him; and they declared their bitter scorn and contempt for Mr. Blair. "The 'Globe,'" they said, "is yet to learn that coarse reproach or bitter invective gives no more evidence of good taste than of good sense, whether it comes from the editorial chair or from the invisible *dictator* [Mr. Benton] who writes from behind the curtain."

That convention met,—"a motley assemblage," says Colonel Benton, "called Democratic,—many self-appointed, or appointed upon management or solicitation,—many alternate substitutes,—many members of Congress, in violation of the principle which condemned the Congress Presidential caucuses in 1824,—some Nullifiers, and an immense outside concourse. Texas land and scrip speculators were largely in it, and more largely on the

outside. . . . Two hundred and sixty-six delegates were present, South Carolina absent; and it was immediately seen that, after all the packing and intriguing, there was still a majority of thirty for Mr. Van Buren. It was seen that he would be nominated on the first ballot, if the majority was to govern. To prevent that, a movement was necessary, and it was made.

"In the morning of the first day, before the verification of the authority of the delegates, before organization, before prayers, and with only a temporary chairman, a motion was made to adopt the two-thirds rule, that is to say, the rule which required a concurrence of two-thirds to effect a nomination. . . . A strenuous contest took place over the adoption of this rule,—all seeing that the fate of the nomination depended upon it. Romulus M. Saunders, of North Carolina, was its mover."

Mr. Benton gives us portions of the heated debate which took place over this proposition. But "the rule was adopted, and by the help of delegates instructed to vote for Mr. Van Buren, and who took that method of betraying their trust while affecting to fulfill it."

Colonel J. W. Forney, who was present at this convention, has in his "Anecdotes of Public Men," which are of a highly interesting character, given us a slight inside glimpse of some of the men present, and their doings, of which I avail myself. He says,—

"Never shall I forget the debate between Benjamin F. Butler, Mr. Van Buren's ex-Attorney-General, and Robert J. Walker, Senator in Congress from Mississippi, in the convention of 1844, on the two-thirds rule. Van Buren, defeated in 1840 by Harrison, was again a candidate for the nomination, but he had faltered on the annexation of Texas, and, though he had a clear majority of the delegates, the adoption of the two-thirds rule ruined his prospects. Butler was no match for the keen little Senatorial Saladin; and when he rose to reply, the House had already been conquered by the logic of his adversary. That convention was James Buchanan's first appearance as an aspirant for President, and had he remained in the field he would assuredly have been the candidate against Mr. Clay. Polk was an accidental selection, and was never dreamed of till the con-

flict made a compromise necessary. In 1848, Van Buren's men took ample revenge by running him as a volunteer candidate for President, and so defeating Cass and electing Taylor. Buchanan's adherents were on the ground, but he had contrived to lose the friendship of many of the leading men of Pennsylvania, and was coldly jostled off the track. In that convention Preston King was the Van Buren leader, backed by David Wilmot, and when New York seceded the doom of the party was sounded. Daniel S. Dickinson headed the New York Hunkers, and took strong ground against the Little Magician, as Van Buren was called. King was cool, calm, and resolved, Dickinson witty and sarcastic, Wilmot aggressive and defiant."

If Colonel Forney will look at the "Nashville Union," the organ of the Democracy of Tennessee at that time, he will find that that paper predicted some months previous the precise state of things which took place at Baltimore, and that Mr. Polk would, in consequence, be the nominee of the convention.

The result was, that the friends of Mr. Van Buren withdrew his name after several ballotings, and James K. Polk, of Tennessee, was nominated. Colonel Benton says truly, "The nomination was a surprise and a marvel to the country."

A Tyler convention, called "*national*," composed exclusively of office-holders and office-seekers, was held in Baltimore simultaneously with the Democratic convention, as if to act in concert with it; but it was wholly ignored, except as an object of ridicule. Nevertheless, they went there, per order, to nominate John Tyler, and they did so, going through the forms, the same as if they did not know they were performing a farce and making themselves the laughing-stocks of the whole country. Mr. Tyler took the nomination quite seriously, wrote an elaborate reply of acceptance, "and two months afterwards joined the Democracy for Polk and Dallas, against Clay and Frelinghuysen, his old Whig friends. . . . But all the sound heart of the Democracy recoiled from the idea of touching a man who, after having been raised high by the Democracy, had gone over to the Whigs to be raised still higher, and now came back to the Democracy to obtain the highest office they could give."*

* Colonel Benton.

The intrigue, started two years before, to defeat Mr. Van Buren, now accomplished its purpose. But the end was not yet: though defeated, he was not slain, and had ample revenge four years after, in prostrating those who had prostrated him.

TERRIBLE RIOTS IN PHILADELPHIA.—ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN, OR "KNOW-NOTHING" PARTY.

Within a week after the holding of the great Baltimore Convention, a bloody and lamentable riot occurred in the upper part of Philadelphia, called Kensington. It grew out of a feeling of antagonism between native Americans and foreigners, principally, if not exclusively, those of Irish birth. The constant interference of this class in our elections, their readiness to be used for the purpose of double or repeated voting,—voting on false naturalization papers,—swearing falsely to procure naturalization papers for those not entitled to them, and habitually creating disturbance at the election-polls, had given rise to an American party, against which that class were bitterly hostile and revengeful.

A meeting of Americans was held at a place in Kensington, near the Hibernia Hose Company's house, for the purpose of considering the expediency of amending the naturalization laws. It was assailed with sticks and stones by a gang of the class mentioned, and broken up.

On the 6th of May, the Americans, undeterred by declarations that they should not hold a meeting there, assembled at the same place in larger numbers than before. They were fired upon with fowling-pieces, rifles, and muskets, from windows, roofs of houses, loop-holes, yards, and alleys, and were finally compelled to disperse. One person, a young man, George Shiffler, who was holding the American flag, was shot through the heart, and many were wounded. The American flag borne by Shiffler was seized by the Irish, torn in tatters, and dragged, amid exulting yells, through the streets and gutters, stamped on, and every indignity put upon it.

This outrage fired the hearts of Americans. To be told by foreigners that they should not meet and discuss matters of general interest, and when doing so to be fired upon, one of

their number killed and many wounded, and their flag grossly insulted, was more than the American spirit could tamely bear. A large meeting of citizens was held at the State House, and spirited resolutions were passed. It was then determined to adjourn to Kensington, with a view to reassert their rights as American citizens. On assembling there, the scene of the former outrage, they were again fired on, and immediately rushed in the direction of the discharge, when they received a destructive fire from persons concealed, and some six or eight Americans were killed and others wounded.

The spirit of revenge was now aroused; thousands of Americans spontaneously gathered that night, attacked the Irish, set fire to such of their houses as had been fired from, and a terrific scene followed. A rumor got abroad that arms and ammunition were stored in St. Augustine's Church, Fourth Street, opposite New. A committee was appointed to examine it and ascertain the fact; it was found to be true, and this brought vengeance upon that beautiful edifice. Fire was set to it, and it was consumed amid the shouts of an infuriated populace.

Another Roman Catholic church—St. Michael's—shared the same fate, provoked by the same cause. The priests' houses adjoining these churches were also fired and consumed, on the allegation that they also contained arms and ammunition.

The rioters had now, unchecked by any military power, spread terror and apprehension around them. Other Catholic churches were surrounded by crowds of excited men, more like demons than human beings, which were protected by armed men within. Fear reigned in every part of the city, which was illuminated by burning churches and dwellings. The mob filled the streets, and made night hideous by their howls of exultation and blasphemy. The citizens dared not retire to rest, and if they had, there could be no sleep amidst such yellings and the lurid glare of burning churches.

The mayor, John M. Scott, issued his proclamation, calling a meeting of the citizens next day at Independence Square, and the City Councils met at midnight. Effective measures were promptly taken to quell the riot; troops were called out, and the rioters dispersed.

Great provocation had been given to the Americans, it is true,* but no provocation could justify such savage and brutal proceedings.

But, though order was temporarily restored, the feud still existed, and only needed a slight cause to make it break out again, and this soon occurred. The native Americans celebrated the Fourth of July in Fisher's Woods, and left their tents, used on the occasion, standing, which were next day destroyed by the Irish. The riots were again renewed, and raged as fiercely as before. Churches were threatened and attacked, on the supposition that arms were stored in them; but none were burnt. A large military force was called out, and prevented further mischief.

The Quaker City was like a beleaguered town, full of troops: cavalry dashing and clattering over the paved streets, infantry moving in various directions, and the artillery occasionally

* A large number of Irishmen were arrested, tried, and convicted as rioters, fined and imprisoned. In passing sentence upon John Daly, September 18, 1844, convicted of riot and murder, Judge King, President Judge of the court, said,—

"The meeting of the 3d of May, 1844, was called for the purpose of considering the expediency of a proposed alteration of the laws of the United States in reference to the naturalization of foreigners, and promoting the ends and objects of the association known as the Native American party. The meeting was organized, and, the officers being placed on a platform erected for the purpose, Mr. S. R. Kramer commenced an address, but was interrupted by a large number of persons opposed to the objects of the meeting, among whom this defendant was particularly prominent. A scene of confusion arose, and shortly after, the opponents of this meeting rushed forward, pulled down the platform, and dispersed the meeting. To this violence the meeting offered no resistance, *preferring to submit to the aggression rather than resort to a forcible maintenance of their rights.* It was, however, agreed to by some that an adjourned meeting for the same purpose should be held on Monday, the 6th of May, at four o'clock in the afternoon, at the same place.

"If the call of the meeting of the 3d of May was addressed exclusively to persons favorable to its objects, the interference of individuals hostile to its proceedings, and the breaking up and dispersion of the meeting by them, was a gross outrage on the rights of those who called it. It was a riot of a flagrant kind. Any body of citizens *having in view a constitutional and legal purpose* have the right peaceably and quietly to assemble together for its consideration and discussion. Any attempt by another body of citizens opposed to the objects of the assembly to interrupt and disperse it, *is not to be tolerated.* In this instance it has led to the long train of riots, murders, and arsons which have disgraced our city and shaken the foundations of social order."

thundering along as if rushing to battle. General Robert Patterson was in command, with head-quarters at the Girard Bank building. General Cadwallader commanded a portion of the troops, which occupied the city for some weeks. A portion of them were then discharged and returned home, many, if not most of them, being from the interior of the State; another portion remained, and were quartered at the Arsenal.

THE FIRST PUBLIC WORKING OF THE TELEGRAPH.—TALK BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BALTIMORE.

Mr. Morse had completed his telegraph line from Washington to Baltimore just previous to the sitting of the Democratic convention, and was ready to report its proceedings every fifteen minutes. The terminus of the line in Washington was in a room adjoining the Supreme Court room, under the Senate-chamber, now the Supreme Court room. Here he received and communicated dispatches during the sitting of the convention, and read them to the large crowd assembled around the window, manifesting the most intense interest in the proceedings at Baltimore, as they were from time to time received and read aloud.

It was a novelty. Every few minutes it would be reported that Mr. So-and-so had made such a motion, and in a minute or two, "the motion has failed," or, "has carried," as the case might be. Again, "A ballot is being taken," etc. "Mr. Polk has been proposed, and a vote is being taken; such a State has voted for Mr. Polk,—such and such and such States have voted for him; he has received two-thirds, and is nominated."

This talking with Baltimore was something so novel, so strange, so extraordinary, and upon a matter of such intense interest, that we could hardly realize the fact. It seemed like enchantment, or a delusion, or a dream.

When the telegraph announced that a vote was being taken for James K. Polk for President, and he had been nominated, the Democrats received the intelligence in silence, not knowing what to make of it.

The next important dispatch sent over the wire was, that the convention had nominated Silas Wright as Vice-President;

and in a few minutes a dispatch was sent to him, informing him of his nomination. Mr. Wright was then in the Senate-chamber just above, and telegraphed back that he respectfully declined the nomination. Another dispatch was immediately received asking him to reconsider the matter,—that a committee had just started in the cars to wait on him, and would call upon him that evening. The committee came, but he persisted in declining the nomination. His friend Van Buren had been slaughtered, and he was not the man to rise on the downfall of his friend. Besides, he remarked, privately, he did not choose to ride behind on the black [slavery] pony. The next day Mr. Dallas was nominated.

FURTHER CHANGES IN THE CABINET.—JOHN C. SPENCER.

A vacancy having occurred on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States by the death of Mr. Justice Thompson, of New York, John C. Spencer, Secretary of the Treasury, was nominated to that position. But the nomination was rejected, and, his relations with Mr. Tyler not being very pleasant, he resigned his office as Secretary of the Treasury, and was succeeded by Judge Bibb, of Kentucky.

Mr. Spencer was a man of great abilities, industry, and endurance, curt manners, and irascible temper. Before being tendered a position in Mr. Tyler's cabinet, he had written an address upon his treachery to the Whig party, more severe than anything that appeared from any other quarter. He fairly flayed the President, lashing him as with a whip of scorpions. Yet, after this, Mr. Tyler could offer him, and he could accept, first, the place of Secretary of War, and second, that of Secretary of the Treasury. It is but just to say of him that he rendered the country important service in the Treasury Department, which he administered with an ability, assiduity, integrity, and faithfulness seldom equaled since the days of Hamilton.

PROGRESS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.—THE ISSUES.—MR. POLK'S KANE LETTER; HOW PRODUCED.—MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECHES.

The principal, if not the only, issues between the two parties were the acquisition of Texas, a protective or non-protective

tariff, and the course to be pursued in regard to Oregon. As to the latter, the Democratic party claimed "the whole or none," and declared our title to the country up to 54° 40′ "clear and indisputable." This, however, was secondary to Texas and the tariff.

The tariff of 1842 had vitalized the country; and so great had been the change in Pennsylvania, under and by means of that act, it was believed by both parties that no man could get the vote of that important State who was hostile to it, or to protection to home industry generally. Other States north of the Potomac, and even south of it, as Kentucky and Louisiana, were as strongly in favor of the protective policy, and opposed to any modification of the act of 1842, as Pennsylvania. Hence it became necessary for the Democrats to represent Mr. Polk, at the North, as not opposed to, but in favor of, at least moderate protection. But in doing this they must take care not so to represent him at the South, where there was the bitterest hostility to protection generally, and the act of 1842 especially. This was a manœuvre which required a degree of cunning, adroitness, and unscrupulousness not easily found. But he who, according to Colonel Benton, could draw Mr. Van Buren into a trap, designedly, under pretense of serving him as a friend, was equal to the undertaking, and accomplished it; and for this and other services he received from Mr. Polk the high position of Secretary of the Treasury.

The manœuvre was the celebrated "Kane letter," signed and purporting to have been written by Mr. Polk, which appeared in the Philadelphia "Pennsylvanian" soon after its date, and was republished by all the Democratic papers of the United States, and most of the Whig papers. Here it is:

"COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE, June 19, 1844.

"DEAR SIR,—I have received recently several letters in reference to my opinions on the subject of the tariff, and among others yours of the 30th ultimo. My opinions on this subject have often been given to the public. They are to be found in my public acts, and in the public discussions in which I have participated.

"I am in favor of a tariff for revenue, such a one as will yield a sufficient amount to the treasury to defray the expenses of the government, economically administered. In adjusting the details of a revenue tariff, I have heretofore sanctioned such moderate discriminating duties as would produce the amount of revenue needed, and at the same time afford reasonable incidental protection to our home industry. I am opposed to a tariff for protection *merely*, and not for revenue.

"Acting upon these general principles, it is well known that I gave my support to the policy of General Jackson's administration on the subject. I voted against the tariff act of 1828. I voted for the act of 1832, which contained modifications of some of the objectionable provisions of the act of 1828. As a member of the committee of ways and means of the House of Representatives, I gave my assent to a bill reported by that committee in December, 1832, making further modifications of the act of 1828, and making also discriminations in the imposition of the duties which it proposed. That bill did not pass, but was superseded by the bill commonly called the Compromise bill, for which I voted.

"In my judgment, it is the duty of the government to extend, as far as it may be practicable to do so, by its revenue laws and all other means within its power, fair and just protection to all the great interests of the whole Union, embracing agriculture, manufactures, the mechanic arts, commerce, and navigation. I heartily approve the resolutions upon this subject, passed by the Democratic National Convention, lately assembled at Baltimore.

"I am, with great respect,

"Dear sir, your obedient servant,

"JAMES K. POLK.

"J. K. KANE, Esq., Philadelphia."

Rumor gave Robert J. Walker the credit of this letter. It was artfully and cunningly prepared, so that Mr. Polk could, upon his own showing, be supported at the South as opposed to protection, and at the North in favor of it; and such was the use made of it,—Mr. Walker himself proving by it to the

people of Mississippi that Mr. Polk was a free-trade man, while Mr. Buchanan and others were proving by the same document to the people of Pennsylvania, and other Northern States, that he was "a better tariff man," that is, more in favor of *protection*, than Mr. Clay! But no people at the North, except those of Pennsylvania, were deceived by it. Mr. Buchanan and other leading Democrats in Pennsylvania knew that the letter was intended to deceive the people of that State. Every intelligent man in the United States knew that Mr. Clay was, and had been all his life, the great champion of the protective policy,—the earnest, eloquent advocate of what was termed "THE AMERICAN SYSTEM;" that is, protection to American labor and American manufactures,—and that Mr. Polk was strongly opposed to this policy. The whole scheme, therefore, of representing Mr. Polk to the people of Pennsylvania as in *favor* of their cherished policy, and Mr. Clay as *opposed* to it, was a gross misrepresentation and imposition. If, however, "all is fair in politics," this piece of artful deception must be so considered.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN PENNSYLVANIA.

As the Presidential election was to be determined by the electoral votes of New York and Pennsylvania, and especially the latter, the canvass was carried on there in the most determined manner.

The tariff of 1842 was the favorite measure of Pennsylvania, as it had revived the iron manufactures, lighting up her mountains with forge-fires; her forges having long stood darkened and silent monuments of the ruinous policy of the free-traders, and which now illumined the whole State by rekindled and animating fires; at the same time business of every kind sprang into activity under the stimulating protection afforded by this tariff. With extraordinary audacity, therefore, the Democrats of that State claimed that tariff as their own measure, and swore by it with a pertinacity truly astonishing. Flags borne in their processions, streamers floating from their flag-staffs, cloth stretched across the streets of every city, town, and hamlet in the State, and across the principal highways in the

country, especially at cross-roads, bore the inscription, in large, bold letters,

"POLK, DALLAS, SHUNK,
AND THE
DEMOCRATIC TARIFF OF 1842."

And, as if it were determined to show how far impudence and audacity could go, in some instances to the above inscription was added,

"WE DARE THE WHIGS TO REPEAL IT."

Dare the Whigs to repeal their own favorite measure! Dare those to repeal who were bravely fighting against repeal! Why, at the moment it was passed, the Democrats of the South announced that it should be repealed, and were, during the whole campaign, violently denouncing it and threatening repeal!

It was represented by the Democratic papers and orators that Mr. Clay was opposed to protection and the tariff of 1842. To counteract this falsehood, Mr. Frederick J. Cope, of Pittsburg, addressed a letter to him stating this fact, to which he replied that he was in favor of protection and opposed to the repeal of the tariff of 1842, it having been asserted that he was in favor of such repeal. Mr. Polk was addressed with a view to know how he stood in regard to that tariff, but refused to answer.*

Meantime, Mr. Wilson McCandless, of Pittsburg, then a candi-

* "Refused to answer." And why did he refuse to answer? In a letter addressed to Daniel Ullman, dated White Sulphur Springs, August 4, 1847, Mr. Clay gives the reason. Speaking of "the *fraud* practiced on Pennsylvania by the Kane letter," he says, "In further support of this *fraud*, I learned yesterday, from the Honorable Reverdy Johnson, that during the canvass of 1844, when some interrogatories were addressed from your State [Pennsylvania] to Polk, requesting a more explicit avowal of his opinion in regard to the tariff of 1842, Mr. Buchanan wrote to Tennessee that the Kane letter was working well, and begging that those interrogatories might not be answered, and Mr. Polk accordingly remained silent." "Working well!" That is, doing its work of deception.

So Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Kane, and Mr. McCandless were knowingly practicing a *fraud* on the people of Pennsylvania for the purpose of electing Mr. Polk and defeating Mr. Clay; for which each got his reward: Mr. Buchanan being appointed Secretary of State, Mr. Kane Judge of the United States Court at Philadelphia, and Mr. McCandless to the same office at Pittsburg. *Honest* politicians! *disinterested* patriots! *virtuous* deceivers!

date for Presidential elector, now Judge of the United States District Court, being invited to address the people of Clarion County, wrote a letter to them, virtually telling them that Mr. Clay had abandoned the principle of protection, and, if elected, would give them a horizontal duty to enable them to contend with the pauper labor of Sweden and Russia (in making iron), and in doing so would give them and the tariff the same support that the rope does the hanging man,—instant death! "Support him if you can: for my part I shall go for Polk and Dallas, who have at heart the true interests of Pennsylvania." Was he honest? did he believe what he said?

Judge McCandless was present in the Senate when, in 1846, Dallas gave the casting vote of the Senate *against* the tariff of 1842, and killed it.

Of a similar character to this Clarion letter was the address of the Democratic committee of Philadelphia, issued on the evening previous to the Presidential election, inclosing a ticket, and placed under the doors of every citizen, as was then customary, as a last appeal to voters, of which address the following is a part,—capitals and italics as therein:

"Fellow-Citizens: The Democratic Committee of Superintendence for the city of Philadelphia inclose you a ticket for the election on Friday, the 1st of November.

"*Are you friendly to the Protection of American Industry?* Remember—the Records of Congress prove that it is to the votes of DEMOCRATS *that the maintenance of that policy is due. The records of Congress prove that Henry Clay did not vote for the Tariff of* 1816—*nor of* 1824—*nor of* 1828. In 1831 he directed all *his efforts to reduce the Tariff of* 1828. He voted for the Tariff of 1832, which LOWERED the PREVIOUS PROTECTION. In 1833 he advocated and voted for the Compromise Act, which CUT UP the whole POLICY of PROTECTION. If you are FRIENDLY to AMERICAN Industry, in reality not in name, vote then against Clay, and for POLK and DALLAS.

"By order of the Democratic Committee of Superintendence.

"October 31, 1844."

When the tariff bill of 1846 was before the Senate, a great number of remonstrances were presented, especially from Pennsylvania, against its passage, and thereby the repeal of the tariff of 1842. Mr. Sevier, of Arkansas, noticing this, said, "Every morning, immediately after prayers, they had a dose of these petitions from Pennsylvania, generally accompanied by some doleful remarks. We had heard a good deal about Pennsylvania having been deceived, cheated, humbugged into the belief that Mr. Polk was a tariff man. Every man who could *read must have known* that he was no tariff man, but a good *free-trade* man."

Mr. Sevier spoke the truth; but it was *severe* on Mr. Buchanan, General Cameron, Judge McCandless, and all the leaders of the Democracy of Pennsylvania.

On presenting sundry petitions or remonstrances of this kind from different counties of Pennsylvania against the passage of the bill then before the Senate,—the bill of 1846,—General Cameron spoke earnestly against its passage and disturbing the tariff of 1842, and raised frequent smiles upon the countenances of Senators, by the very *plain* manner in which he talked to Mr. Dallas about the manner in which they carried on the campaign in Pennsylvania in 1844, pressing Mr. Polk upon the people as a tariff man. "You and I, Mr. President," said Mr. Cameron, "remember the scenes of 1844 in our State; the anxiety that pervaded the Democratic party until the Kane letter made its appearance. That letter was seized upon by the political leaders, was used upon the stump, was translated into German, and published in all our party papers, English and German. It is not too much to say," continued Mr. Cameron, "that that letter turned the scale and decided the Presidential election. But for it you would not now be sitting where you are, nor would Mr. Polk be occupying the Presidential chair." There was a general smile upon the faces of the Whigs in the Senate, and also upon those of the spectators in the gallery and the lobby.

As General Cameron took his seat, Mr. Webster rose, and, after some preliminary remarks, said,—

"Sir,—I propose, before I sit down, to ask the honorable

member from Pennsylvania, with great respect, a question or two. I happened to be in Pennsylvania in October, 1844, in divers villages and counties. I saw the preparations that were going on for the then approaching elections; and it appeared to me that the Democratic party in Pennsylvania had three prominent, eminent, distinct favorites. These three favorites were often borne on their flags and banners. I saw them emblazoned in Chester County, and in Schuylkill County, and in other places. The three favorites borne on these banners were, 'Polk,' 'Dallas,' and 'The Tariff of 1842.' I am rather inclined to think that of these favorites the last mentioned is at this present moment most in favor. I would ask the honorable member from Pennsylvania himself whether he has not seen these same banners floating in various places?"

Mr. Cameron.—"I answer the Senator with great pleasure. I attended, perhaps, every Democratic meeting within my reach in that State—and some of them were at places one hundred and fifty miles distant from my home—in order to support the great cause of Democracy; and at all these meetings the watch-words and the mottoes were, 'Polk,' 'Dallas,' and (before his lamented death) 'Muhlenberg,' and 'The Tariff of 1842.' And after the death of our candidate for the gubernatorial chair, they were, 'Polk,' 'Dallas,' 'Shunk,' and 'The Tariff of 1842.' Neither of the three, sir, would have got the vote of Pennsylvania without the last,—the tariff of 1842. Much as we disliked Mr. Clay, and sincerely attached as we were to the Democratic party, all would have gone before we would have relinquished the tariff of 1842."

On the 27th of July, Mr. Cameron presented the proceedings of a meeting of Democratic citizens residing in the valley of Wyoming, expressing their opposition to the proposed change in the tariff.

"The president of the meeting, Mr. Hollenback," he said, "was the son of one of the early settlers of the valley. He was a Democrat, honored and respected by all around him.

"Hendricks B. Wright, the President of the Baltimore Convention, of which so much has been said here in connection with the passage of this bill, took part in the meeting, made a

speech, and united fully in the proceedings. *These proceedings tell you plainly that the nominees of the party could not have succeeded in* 1844 *if it had not been believed they would be friendly to the labor and industry of the country.*"

Confirmatory of what General Cameron has here said, in reply to Mr. Webster, is the declaration of David R. Porter, Governor of Pennsylvania in 1844, in his first annual message after the Presidential election: "Neither of the Presidential candidates could have hoped to get a majority of the votes of Pennsylvania had not his claims been based upon the assurance that he was friendly to the continuance of the tariff laws substantially as they stood." Governor Porter, it must be remembered, was a Democrat.

Can it be believed that Mr. Buchanan and the leaders of the Democracy were deceived? "It was impossible that Pennsylvanians could have been misled," exclaimed Mr. Sevier; "it was NOTORIOUS to the world that Mr. Polk was a free-trade man, and opposed to the whole doctrine of protection." Now, as Mr. Buchanan himself "took the stump," and assured the people of Pennsylvania, in the most positive manner, that Mr. Polk *was* a *tariff* man, and a *better one* than Mr. Clay, that he, Mr. Clay, had done more injury to the principles of protection during his political life than he could do good for it if he lived to the age of Methuselah, and that the good people of Berks must vote for the Democratic candidates, James K. Polk and George M. Dallas, if they desired to preserve the present tariff of protection,* what conclusion must we come to in regard to his honesty and truthfulness? Mr. Buchanan knew as well as Mr. Sevier that Mr. Polk was a free-trade man, "and opposed to the whole doctrine of protection." Did he not, therefore, *intentionally* deceive the people of Pennsylvania?

Such were the means by which Mr. Clay was defeated, Mr. Polk elected, and Mr. Buchanan secured for himself the office of Secretary of State under Mr. Polk.

Had the people of Pennsylvania really known the views of each of the candidates in regard to the tariff of 1842, and the protective policy; had they not been intentionally deceived in

* His speech at Reading.

this respect; could they have foreseen what consequences would follow the election of Mr. Polk: can there be a doubt that Mr. Clay would have received the electoral vote of the State, and in that case been elected? No one can, no one will, assert the contrary. But history is made; it is recorded, and there it must stand. There can be no *expunging* of this record.

CAMPAIGN IN NEW YORK.

If the immense meetings which were held in every State, county, city, village, and hamlet, the great zeal and enthusiasm which everywhere prevailed, the pride felt for their candidates by the Whigs, and the comparative obscurity of the Democratic candidate for President, were to be considered evidences of the popular feeling, one could scarcely doubt that Mr. Clay would be elected by a triumphant majority. It was, perhaps, the strong prospect that he would be, and the fear, both of the Democrats and Free-soilers, of such a result, that defeated him.

Indignant as Silas Wright and other friends of Mr. Van Buren were at his defeat at the national convention, they were too faithful as *party* men not to do all in their power to defeat Mr. Clay and insure the success of their own party. New York having thirty-six electoral votes, it was a matter of vast importance whether they should be given to the Democratic or the Whig candidate. Upon this vote the election would depend. If given to Mr. Clay, he would be elected; and it was known that he had great popularity in the western and northeastern counties especially, as well as in the city of New York and other parts of the State. It was necessary, therefore, that the Democrats should make extraordinary efforts to prevent his getting the electoral vote of the State.

Mr. Wright was a strong man with his party, and his popularity had been greatly increased by his refusal to accept the nomination for Vice-President, tendered to him by the Baltimore Convention after the defeat of his friend Van Buren. Could he be persuaded to accept the nomination for governor of the State, his strength with the people might possibly carry the State for Polk. Morose as he was at the throwing over-

board of his friend at Baltimore, he finally, but reluctantly, consented to become the gubernatorial candidate.

About the same time, or perhaps a little before, certain leading and influential politicians of the State, of the "Barnburner" wing of the Democratic party, friends of Van Buren and Wright, who were opposed to the annexation of Texas, and indignant that Mr. Van Buren had been sacrificed by the South because he opposed annexation, issued a "secret circular," the purport of which was, that while the party must zealously oppose annexation, there must be no division in the ranks; but in all cases efforts must be made in primary conventions to select candidates eminent for ability and of known hostility to the acquisition of Texas.

But all this was not considered certain of preventing Mr. Clay from carrying the State. There were many Free-soilers, or Abolitionists, in the State, who were opposed to the annexation of Texas, on the ground that slavery would thereby be extended. Mr. Polk was the candidate of the friends of annexation. Little was known of him, but thus much was. Mr. Clay had, in his Raleigh letter, declared emphatically against annexation, asserting that annexation would be inevitable war with Mexico. If the Free-soilers were honest, therefore, in the wish they professed, they could support no other candidate than Mr. Clay. But instead of this they did all in their power to defeat him, elect his opponent, and thus bring about the annexation of Texas. They put a candidate of their own in the field, Mr. Birney, who, I am convinced, ran for no other purpose than to defeat Mr. Clay, of whom he was a personal enemy. He took a tour through the State of New York, where he could do the Whigs most harm by drawing votes from them, and thus aided largely to effect the object he desired.

The Free-soil or Abolition papers were scarcely behind the Democratic in their personal vituperation of Mr. Clay. It was a heinous crime for him to be a slaveholder; it was not even a fault in Mr. Polk. The "Chronicle," an Abolition organ published in Boston and edited by the Rev. Joshua Leavitt, charged Mr. Frelinghuysen with being a slaveholder; and the charge was made out something after this manner. Slavery once, and

not very long since, existed in New Jersey; and when it was abolished, there was an old colored woman who had been a slave in the Frelinghuysen family, who, as she was now old, preferred to remain in a good home, with the family she had been with all her life, to seeking another; and surely she was wise, and the family were kind. But thereby, in Mr. Leavitt's eye, the amiable, exemplary, and Christian-like Mr. Frelinghuysen was a *slaveholder.*

The course pursued by the Free-soilers in New York was one of the causes of Mr. Polk's obtaining the vote of that State. There was one other which I cannot forget: the frauds perpetrated by the Empire Club, headed and managed by one not less celebrated in his day than WILLIAM M. TWEED has been since,—the notorious ISAIAH RHYNDERS. That these frauds were stupendous is now as well known as it is that this Rhynders was a fit instrument with which to perpetrate them, and that he was paid therefor by being appointed to an important office in the custom-house.

But while we were lecturing the Free-soilers for pursuing a course the effect of which would be the election of Mr. Polk and the acquisition of more slave territory, Mr. Clay most unadvisedly came to their aid by doing that which furnished them with something like an excuse, if not a justification. Mr. Polk had written one, the famous KANE, letter, and was from that moment silent; not a word could be drawn from him. But Mr. Clay would not throw away his pen, as his friends most ardently desired, and now he must write to his friend Stephen Miller, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a letter in regard to Texas, commonly known as "*The Alabama Letter*," which expressed a feeling so contrary to that which his friends at the North entertained, and honestly represented him as entertaining, that its publication came upon them with all the chilling effects of a wet blanket. It was of so entirely different a tone from the feeling then existing at the North, and from his Raleigh letter,—so different in temperature,—that it fairly chilled his friends, and gave the Free-soilers what they had not before,—a shadow of an excuse for supporting a third candidate. It could do him no good anywhere, certainly

not in Alabama, or any other Southern State; and he should have known that it would do him harm at the North.

At a Fourth of July dinner in Boston, in 1828, some one gave as a toast, "*John Quincy Adams*—may he confound his enemies!" to which Mr. Webster, who was present, immediately added, "As he *has* his *friends*." Certainly Mr. Clay did now confound his friends. But the letter,—the following is all that was important of it:

"ASHLAND, July 1, 1844.

. . . . "As to the idea of my courting the Abolitionists, it is perfectly absurd. No man in the United States has been half so much abused by them as I have." [Was it wise and discreet to say this, even if true?]

"I consider the Union a great political partnership, and that new members ought not to be admitted into the concern at the imminent hazard of its dissolution. Far from having any personal objection to the annexation of Texas, I should be glad to see it annexed without dishonor, without war, with the common consent of the Union, and upon just and fair terms.

"H. CLAY.

"STEPHEN MILLER, Esq., Tuscaloosa, Alabama."

This was Mr. Clay's political death-warrant. It took everybody at the North and East, as well as at the West, by surprise; Whig editors knew not what to say of it, and perhaps made matters worse by saying anything about it. Up to the time when this appeared, the Whigs were successfully assailing the Democrats; but this reversed the position of the two parties,—the Democrats now becoming the assailants, and the Whigs put upon the defensive, to the end of the campaign. Mr. Greeley was right in saying that "it weakened the previous hold of his advocates on the moral convictions of the more considerate and conscientious voters of the free States."

Mr. Clay endeavored to repair the mistake, or *blunder*, he had made by writing another letter, affirming that there was not a sentiment or opinion expressed in his Raleigh letter to which he did not adhere; that he was opposed to immediate annexation, as it would involve us in a war with Mexico, etc.

But he had done the mischief. He had confounded his friends and gratified his enemies.

From this time his prospects of being elected were less and less encouraging, though the zeal of the Whigs in his support abated not a jot, nor were Whig meetings less numerous and enthusiastic.

Mr. Crittenden, the devoted friend from youth of Mr. Clay, the eloquent, chivalrous, noble-hearted Kentuckian; Mr. Corwin, of Ohio, who could, with his wonderful powers of wit, ridicule, pathos, drollery, and comical contortions of face, draw alternate tears and laughter, shouts of derision, or bitter words of anger from the multitude; Robert C. Schenck, of Ohio, who could sting with wit and scathe with sarcasm; Richard W. Thompson, Oliver H. Smith, and Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana; Governor Morehead, Garrett Davis, and John B. Thompson, of Kentucky; Governor Jones, John Bell, M. P. Gentry, and Mr. Henry, of Tennessee,—these and many others at the West addressed the people at Nashville, Louisville, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Columbus, Dayton, and other places, creating immense ardor among Whigs throughout the West, this ardor manifesting itself especially among the women, who were all "Clay men;" and could they have voted, he would have been elected by a most triumphant majority; but, deprived of this privilege, they could only manifest their zeal by attending in large numbers, as they did everywhere, Whig meetings and conventions, inspiring the speakers by their presence, rewarding their efforts with approving smiles, and taking a principal part in the song-singing, which was a prominent feature in all these enthusiastic gatherings.

"The Clay campaign," as it is called, was, like "the Harrison campaign" (minus the log cabin and hard cider), a grand gala-season; almost the only *work* thought of was political work,—promoting the election of Henry Clay; and no labor could be more agreeable; it was, in truth, recreation, hilarity, and the constant meeting of friends,—all Whigs were then friends, and warm ones, too,—in the finest of spirits, and exchanging cordial greetings.

I have said that the ladies were all "*Clay men.*" Yes, even

though their husbands, fathers, and brothers opposed him. Figuratively, this is true; but not quite true to the letter. A pleasant anecdote will illustrate this. The *Locos*, as the Polk party were called, held a large popular convention at Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, which John K. Kane, of Philadelphia,—famous as giving name to the more famous "Kane Letter,"—was invited to address. He attended and addressed the meeting, which was presided over by Hendricks B. Wright, president of the national convention that nominated Polk. Next day Mr. Kane called at Mr. Wright's house to pay a visit of respect, and, on being ushered into the parlor, found himself amidst a dozen ladies very busily engaged in preparing Clay badges, flags, and banners, many of which strewed the room. He stopped, looked surprised and puzzled, and, as he himself said, thought he had entered the wrong house, as this was evidently Clay head-quarters.

Mrs. Wright rose, and, seeing his embarrassment, said, "Don't be alarmed, Mr. Kane; you are right this time, and just where you *ought* to be, among Clay people. Though my husband is a *Polk* man, I am a *Clay* man; in fact, the ladies are all Clay men. The Whigs are to have a great gathering, as you probably know, day after to-morrow, and we ladies, several of us the wives of Polk men, are preparing banners and badges for the occasion. I regret that your stay among us is to be temporary; we should be happy, if you will wear it, to present you with one of our most beautiful Clay rosettes or badges; you ought to delight to follow so noble a chief as Henry Clay."

Mr. Kane managed his case as best he could with the ready-witted, accomplished, independent Mrs. Wright. Though greatly pleased with his visit, Mr. Wright not being at home, he soon made good his retreat; but the circumstances of the visit were quickly known to every one in the village, and caused much amusement.

With General Schouler I can say, "we linger with fond affection over the old Whig campaign of 1844." It has pleasant memories; it calls up, and I see before me in full life, health, and activity, many a warmly-cherished friend, and a host of

noble, high-souled, eloquent Whigs, who did yeoman service in that never-to-be-forgotten campaign.

One of its pleasant memories, too, is the farce of Tylerism, and the impotent malice of the Tyler organ, "The Madisonian." I have mentioned that a Tyler convention was called and held at Baltimore at the same time that the Democratic convention sat there; that an affiliation was sought and treated with scorn, and that a formal nomination of John Tyler as President of the United States was made and accepted with as much gravity as if the whole affair had not been an uproarious farce or burlesque.

John Jones, of "The Madisonian," the simple-minded John, who took everything in sober earnest, and really looked upon John Tyler as the greatest man living on earth, advocated the election of Mr. Tyler with all the zeal of an honest conviction, at the same time firing poisoned arrows at Henry Clay in absolute showers. But "honest John," though the nominal, was not the real writer of the ill-tempered articles with which the paper teemed. Able, but venomous, pens were to be found among the Tyler office-holders, and they were called into service,—the service for which the office was given. As bitter invectives and sharp assaults upon private character, some of them will bear comparison with those of Junius; and he who wishes to fill his quiver with arrows of that character will find as good models in "The Madisonian" of that day, perhaps, as in Junius's letters.

John Jones's Methodistical appearance, long hair, solemn visage, simple-mindedness, and admiration for John Tyler, made him a standing target for all the barbed shafts of the wits of the press, and the laughing-stock of all others. The withdrawal of his name as a candidate by Mr. Tyler, and giving his support to Mr. Polk, must have sadly broken up and scattered the delusions in which John lived, as in a rainbow. Nor was his delusion greater than that of his master, who really believed that the Tyler convention at Baltimore was a fair representation of the *people*, and that he could be elected, as he afterwards acknowledged, declaring at the same time that he had been shamefully deceived by pretended friends in whom he confided

at the time. He found, however, after two months' candidacy, that himself and his faithful friend of "The Madisonian" were the only persons in earnest in regard to his nomination, and he therefore withdrew.

The first State election which took place, and tested the strength of parties therein, was that of Louisiana. The contest was carried on with all the energy of hope and desperation. Force and fraud were freely resorted to, but in spite of these the Whigs carried the State. At the Presidential election, however, the famous, or *infamous*, "PLAQUEMINE FRAUDS" gave the electoral vote to Mr. Polk. These frauds were the work of the afterwards distinguished rebel, John Slidell. He had made a bet with General Barrow upon the result of the Presidential election in that State, which, if the election was not fraudulent, he had fairly won; but he never claimed the bet. "If he had," said General Barrow to me, "I should have held him to a personal responsibility as the author of these frauds; and this he well knew was my intention."

The fraud simply consisted in taking down to Plaquemine, from New Orleans, two steamboats loaded with as rough and villainous a crowd of rascals as could be picked up in and about the wharves and purlieus of the city, to vote "early and *often*." All votes were required to be handed in unfolded, and if any one was for the Whig candidates for electors, it was, if possible, rejected. It was dangerous for a Whig to be on the ground. The vote at this parish had been as follows:

	1840.	1842.	1843.
Whig	40	93	34
Democratic	250	179	306

Never so high as three hundred and fifty. But at this election—1844—Polk had a MAJORITY of nine hundred and seventy! Many, if not most, of those who voted at Plaquemine on *Wednesday* had voted in New Orleans on *Monday;* those who had not were foreigners, non-residents, etc., not having a right to vote. Now, as Polk carried the State by a majority of six hundred and ninety only, it is very easy to see where it came from and how it was obtained.

But, famous as the "Plaquemine frauds" became, they sank

into insignificance when compared with those perpetrated in the city of New York, of which I have spoken. In his grand and stirring speech at Faneuil Hall, a few days after the result of the election was fully known, Mr. Webster said, "But why should two free States—New York and Pennsylvania—go against us? I approach the subject at once, for 'tis useless to keep it back; and I say that in my mind there is a great necessity for a thorough reformation of the naturalization laws."

Mr. Webster's allusion to the fraudulent votes given in the city of New York by foreigners—immense numbers of whom had received, dishonestly, naturalization papers just previous to the election, and most, if not all, of whom had voted "early and often"—was fully understood, and in unison with the feelings of resentment which the atrocious violations of the law and violence at the polls could not fail to excite.

But other causes were also instrumental in defeating Mr. Clay; and of these the first was a concentration of the naturalized foreign Catholic citizens to resist Native-Americanism. The Native-American movement, though of Democratic origin, received more countenance and sympathy from the Whigs than from their opponents. This fact was artfully exaggerated and distorted, and in consequence nearly the whole foreign and Catholic vote was cast against Mr. Clay. Another cause why the Catholics opposed the ticket was, that Mr. Frelinghuysen was President of the American Bible Society, and the Catholics, being opposed to him on that account, could not vote for Mr. Clay without voting for him. The late Archbishop Spalding, a Kentuckian by birth, was an admirer of Mr. Clay, and declared his purpose in my presence to vote for him, but not for Mr. Frelinghuysen, for the reason just stated; but when informed that he could not vote for one without voting for the other, he replied, "Then I shall not vote for Mr. Clay."

The majority of Mr. Polk over Mr. Clay in the State of New York was five thousand and eighty. Mr. Birney, the Abolition candidate, obtained fifteen thousand eight hundred and twelve votes in the State, three-fourths of which were taken from the Whig party, which would have given the State to the Whigs

by a majority of four or five thousand votes. It was with some reason, therefore, that the whole Whig press of that and other States asserted that the "Liberty party" had themselves caused the election of an annexation President, and therefore had effected what they professed strongly to deprecate.

For some days the result of the election was doubtful, and the people were kept in a state of extreme anxiety. It was hoped that that portion of New York west of Cayuga Bridge would give Mr. Clay votes enough to overcome Mr. Polk's majority in the eastern and southern counties, including his fraudulent majority in the city of New York; but this hope proved fallacious, and the news finally came of the majority of the State being cast for Mr. Polk. It was a severe shock to the Whigs. It is hardly possible, at this day, to conceive the distress which pervaded the city of Philadelphia the night following this news, and for many days after. It was as if the first-born of every family had been stricken down. The city next day was clothed in gloom; thousands of women were weeping, but none exulting. Even the leading Democrats looked sober, and manifested no disposition to rejoice. Business was nearly suspended on Saturday, no one feeling any heart to attend to it. That day, Sunday, and for several days afterwards, the banners and flags of the two parties, which floated everywhere, but especially in Market Street, were left to dally mournfully with the wind. Had a pestilence suddenly fallen upon the city, it could not have presented a more gloomy aspect, or created more grief.

Nor was Philadelphia an exception in this manifestation of feeling on this occasion: throughout the West and North, in towns, villages, hamlets, and country, it was the same. Any language which would truly represent the feeling generally manifested would at this day appear extravagant and hyperbolical, and therefore mine may appear to some as exaggerated; but those now living who were old enough to remember the events of that day will bear witness that I speak the words of soberness and truth.

The entire vote for Presidential electors in the United States, in 1844, excluding South Carolina, which elected by her Legislature, was,—

Popular vote.	Electoral vote.
For Polk, 1,327,323.	For Polk, 170.
" Clay, 1,288,533.	" Clay, 105.
" Birney, 62,263.	

For Mr. Polk.—Maine, 9; New Hampshire, 6; New York, 36; Pennsylvania, 26; Virginia, 17; South Carolina, 9; Georgia, 10; Louisiana, 6; Mississippi, 6; Indiana, 12; Illinois, 9; Alabama, 9; Missouri, 7; Arkansas, 3; Michigan, 5.

For Mr. Clay.—Massachusetts, 12; Rhode Island, 4; Connecticut, 6; Vermont, 6; New Jersey, 7; Delaware, 3; Maryland, 8; North Carolina, 11; Kentucky, 12; Tennessee, 13; Ohio, 23.

Statesmen, editors, and men of intelligence in Europe were utterly confounded: they could not comprehend how it was possible that Mr. Clay, whom they knew by reputation as not only one of the ablest men in America, but also one of the first statesmen of the world, could be defeated by a man of whose name neither they nor one out of a hundred who voted for him had heard until he was nominated. The theory of our government, they said, was that in choosing their rulers the people would make choice of the ablest, most experienced, and most distinguished citizens to fill the highest offices; practically, however, it seemed as if the most obscure and insignificant were chosen. If such were the fruits of republican government, they wanted none of it; better, far better, they insisted, to take the man born and educated to rule.

To the most sagacious observer of political events, the election of Mr. Clay must have appeared, at the opening of the Presidential campaign, a foregone conclusion, an inevitable fact, which could be prevented only by a power more than human. But the womb of the future teemed with great events, to bring forth which required a different result; and we can now look back, and in the light of the past perceive that

> " There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will;"

that the defeat of Mr. Clay and the election of Mr. Polk were for a great, wise, and benevolent purpose. This could not then be seen by Mr. Clay's devoted friends, and hence their

unmitigated sorrow at his defeat, and deep mortification that so brilliant and patriotic a statesman and orator, who had for so many long years served his country in various high positions, and had won not only a national but a world-wide reputation, should be defeated as a candidate for the chief magistracy by one scarcely known beyond the bounds of his own State.*

* The venerable Ambrose Spencer, late Chief Justice of New York, in a letter to Mr. Clay, dated Albany, November 21, 1844, in the fullness of his heart said, "I can no longer resist the inclination which impels me to commune with you on the disastrous results [of the election]. The result of our canvass shows what mighty efforts have been made. You received 232,411 votes; Polk, 237,432; Birney, 15,875. What a monstrous poll! Your vote is 6594 more than Harrison's in 1840, when his majority exceeded 13,000. The Abolition vote lost you the election, as three-fourths of them were firm Whigs converted into Abolitionists. The foreign vote also destroyed your election; another cause was the utter mendacity, frauds, and villainies of Loco-focoism. This untoward event has produced universal gloom, and has shaken public confidence. Even many who voted for Polk now deeply regret the result."

John H. Westwood to Mr. Clay.

"BALTIMORE, November 28, 1844.

* * * * * * * * * *

"It was the Irish and Dutch vote that caused our defeat. . . . In my native city alone, in the short space of two months, there were over one thousand naturalized. Of these, nine-tenths voted the Loco-foco ticket."

William D. Lewis to Mr. Clay.

"PHILADELPHIA, November 30, 1844.

* * * * * * * * * *

"The glorious and beneficial result has been prevented through wicked, unprincipled men, by frauds upon the elective franchise, as monstrous as they are unprecedented; by fanaticism, both religious and political, without a parallel in history."

Benjamin I. Leedom to Mr. Clay.

"NEW YORK, December 29, 1844.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Happy is he who carries into retirement the prayers of the patriotic and intelligent of his country. This thou hast."

Dr. Mercer to Mr. Clay.

"NEW ORLEANS, December 7, 1844.

* * * * * * * * * *

"I have never before witnessed such disappointment, distress, and disgust. The feeling seemed to pervade all classes. I have heard men of the opposite faction express their regret at the success of their party."

What the history of the United States would have been had Mr. Clay been elected we can in part state very confidently, but beyond that can only conjecture. We know from his Raleigh letter that Texas would not have been acquired, except by a friendly arrangement with Mexico; consequently, there would have been no war with her. There would then have been no reason for our demanding, by purchase or otherwise, any more territory, and California, New Mexico, and Arizona might have remained *terra incognita*, with their bowels full of gold and silver, for long, long years to come. Out of the election of Mr. Polk came the war with Mexico, the acquisition of Texas, and the extension of the boundaries of the United States to the Pacific Ocean, south of latitude forty-two degrees north, the growth of a great commercial city on the Pacific, the mining of thousands of millions of gold, and the spanning of the continent from ocean to ocean by railroads and telegraphic wires.

Looking, then, at the results which followed the election of

John Quincy Adams to Mr. Clay.

"WASHINGTON, January 4, 1845.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"The unexpected and inauspicious issue of the recent Presidential election has been on many accounts painful to me; but on none more or so much so as on the dark shade which it has cast upon our prospects of futurity. . . . But the glaring frauds by which the election was consummated afford a sad presentiment of what must be expected hereafter.

"We hope that a merciful Providence will yet preside over the destinies of our country, and avert the calamities with which she is threatened."

John R. Thompson to Mr. Clay.

"UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, April 8, 1845.

* * * * * * * * * * *

"I cannot tell you, sir, the sense of desolation and crushed hopes with which the painful intelligence of your defeat was received. Frauds, the most infamous in the annals of the elective franchise, stifled the voice of the people, and national disgrace was effected by a motley party of Doverites and Agrarians, Mormons and Repudiators, the voters of Plaquemine and the outlaws of the Empire Club."

All the writers above quoted, from different sections of the country, were men of prominence; some of them of the very highest. From them it can be seen what the public feeling was on the defeat of Mr. Clay and the means by which it was effected.

Mr. Polk, and which would not have followed the election of Mr. Clay, we can hardly over-estimate their magnitude or influence upon the nation and upon the world.

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS, DECEMBER, 1844.

Congress met at the usual time. Under what a different state of feelings did both parties reassemble from those which both entertained when they separated! The Whigs were then confident of carrying the election; not a doubt was entertained that Mr. Clay would be triumphantly elected. On the other hand, their opponents had little hope of success, and were prepared for defeat. The Whigs met one another with heavy hearts. It might have been expected that the Democrats would, after their triumph, show something like joy and exultation; but they were as lugubrious and melancholic as if they had been the vanquished instead of the victors.

THE TWENTY-FIRST RULE RESCINDED.

I have given an account of various highly-exciting scenes in the House, in which Mr. Adams played a principal part, growing out of his offering petitions on the subject of slavery, which petitions were, by what was known as the twenty-first rule, laid on the table without being read. Mr. Adams and the Northern Whigs considered this rule as an infringement of the natural right of petition, and resisted it for long years, the Northern Democrats siding with the representatives from the slave States, first in adopting and then in sustaining it. He invariably, every session, made an effort to effect its repeal, but without success until the present. On the third day of December, and third of the session, in pursuance of notice given the previous day, he submitted a resolution to rescind this rule, now the twenty-fifth, upon which he demanded the ayes and noes. Mr. Thompson, of Mississippi, moved to lay the resolution on the table; lost, yeas 81, nays 104.

The resolution was then adopted, ayes 108, noes 80. And so the *famous* twenty-first rule, which had been the cause of so much bad blood between the North and the South, of so many

angry discussions and disgraceful scenes in the House, was rescinded, with no debate, no struggle, no noise and clamor, as heretofore,—Northern Democrats now voting for it. Even South Carolina was dumb; not a word of opposition from those fierce champions of slavery, Rhett and Holmes of that State, nor from Wise and Drumgoole, of Virginia. The whole "chivalrous South," heretofore so sensitive on this subject, was silent and submissive, with the exception of moving and voting to lay the resolution on the table. What had wrought this great change? Was it a tribute or payment to the "*Liberty party*" for the essential aid they had given the Democrats in the late election by running a third candidate and thus defeating Mr. Clay? Northern Whigs were glad to obtain the abrogation of so obnoxious a rule, though they could not but feel sore as to the means by which it was effected. The ultra Abolitionists and extreme advocates of slavery, who had for years berated and fought one another so determinedly, now presented the interesting tableau of the lion and the lamb in peaceful juxtaposition,—rendering one another mutual service.

Shortly after the rescinding of the twenty-first rule, Mr. Adams presented a petition for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The question of reception was raised, and a motion made to lay it on the table failed; and on the question, "Shall this petition be received?" the ayes and noes being demanded thereon were—ayes 107, noes 81.

In the House, Mr. Clingman, of North Carolina, took occasion to expose the frauds and outrages perpetrated at the election in New York and elsewhere, in a speech in which he demonstrated that but for these and the illegal votes cast in Georgia and Louisiana, and the deceptions practiced upon the people of Pennsylvania, Mr. Clay would have received the electoral votes of those four States, eighty-eight in all, giving him one hundred and ninety-three to Mr. Polk's eighty-seven. He especially exposed the doings of the famous Empire Club in the city of New York, headed by Isaiah Rhynders, and stated that in St. Lawrence County, bordering on Canada, sixteen hundred and twenty-seven votes were given more than were ever given before; and in Georgia fifteen thousand nine hundred and

forty-four votes were cast more than there were voters in the State. He also exposed and commented on the Plaquemine frauds, and the deceptions practiced upon the people of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Clingman commented severely on the spectacle presented in the House on the occasion of the rescinding of the twenty-first rule. It was but the year before, he said, that Mr. Rhett, the Hotspur of the South, declared that the rescinding of that rule would be a virtual dissolution of the Union; yet on that occasion there was no burst of indignation, no clamorous opposition, no fierce denunciation of those who voted for its abrogation, no threats of dissolution of the Union. On the contrary, all were silent and submissive. He himself had, the session before, voted to rescind this rule, and for so doing had been denounced as a renegade and traitor; and it had been declared that any man who did not sustain this rule was a traitor to the South. Now, as these Southern gentlemen, heretofore so fiery on this subject, sat silently by when the rule was rescinded, and did not sustain it, according to their own logic, they were "traitors to the South."

This unlooked-for exposure of the conduct of the Southern "fire-eaters," who had at all times before been so valorous whenever it was sought to rescind that rule, created a marked sensation among them, rousing the spirit of "chivalry," and it became evident that they meant mischief to one who had dared thus to charge them as guilty—according to their own denunciations of him—of "treason to the South.

Mr. Yancey, of Alabama, a man about Mr. Clingman's age, both being under thirty, was selected to reply to Mr. Clingman. He did so, and in such a manner as to provoke a challenge. Mr. Yancey was a new member, elected to fill the vacancy occasioned by the transfer of Mr. Dixon H. Lewis to the Senate. He came heralded as a young man of brilliant parts, eloquent, well educated, daring, and the hottest of Hotspurs, to whom a duel was only a pleasant morning recreation. Clingman was no coward, not one to be bluffed down, even by such a dare-devil as Yancey. A challenge and an exchange of shots, one morning before breakfast, resulted; but no life was lost, no

blood drawn. After this exhibition of pluck, the affair came to an end in some way,—how, I do not remember.

Mr. Yancey's speech was grossly insulting to the whole North, charging that portion of the Union with lack of patriotism and courage, and assuming that these were only to be found at the South. No one thought it worth while to challenge him for these taunts; but Mr. Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, gave him his change in sarcasm and irony,—weapons he could use with stinging effect.

MASSACHUSETTS AND SOUTH CAROLINA.—THE ONE DESIRES, THE OTHER REFUSES, TO PERMIT A SUIT TO BE INSTITUTED TO TEST THEIR SEVERAL RIGHTS, AND THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF CERTAIN STATE LAWS.—MR. HOAR SENT ON A MISSION TO SOUTH CAROLINA.—IS IN DANGER OF BEING MOBBED AND MURDERED.—IS OBLIGED TO LEAVE THE STATE TO SAVE HIS LIFE.

During the winter of 1844–45 appeared at Washington, and in the House of Representatives, a man venerable in years, with a white head, mild, pleasing countenance, a tall, slender figure, reserved, but bland and dignified in deportment, who attracted much attention. It was Mr. Samuel Hoar, of Massachusetts,—father of the brothers of that name who sat in the Forty-third Congress, and formerly a member himself,—who was on his way from Charleston, South Carolina, to his residence at Concord, Massachusetts.

What gave interest to Mr. Hoar's presence at the seat of government was the fact that he had been sent by Governor Briggs, of Massachusetts, under the authority of the Legislature, as an agent of the State, to reside for a time at Charleston, South Carolina, "to collect and transmit accurate information respecting the imprisonment of citizens of Massachusetts (in South Carolina), and to bring suits in their behalf."

One of the grievances of which the North had to complain of the South, and for which they could obtain no redress, was the arbitrary imprisonment, and sometimes the selling into slavery for jail-fees, of colored seamen on board of Northern vessels which entered any Southern port. Under the law of the State of South Carolina, especially, persons of color entering her harbors on board of Northern vessels were immediately seized,

taken out of their vessels, and thrust into jail; and for this there was no redress. It had been sought of Congress, but Congress was too largely made up of Southern men to do anything in the premises, and so these outrages went on with impunity.

English sailors of color were treated in the same manner, and the British government made formal complaint against such treatment of her sailors, and remonstrated with the general government, demanding its stoppage. The matter was referred to the Attorney-General, William Wirt, who reported that the State law under which such outrages were perpetrated was contrary to "the Constitution, treaties, and laws of the United States, and incompatible with the rights of all nations in amity with the United States."

Under this decision South Carolina forbore to apply her unconstitutional laws to the citizens of foreign nations, but still enforced them against colored citizens of other States, though her own eminent jurist, William Johnson, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, declared that these laws "trampled on the Constitution," "implied a direct attack upon the sovereignty of the United States," "and were unconstitutional and void."

The purpose of Mr. Hoar's mission was to bring suits in the United States District Court to test the constitutionality of these Draconian laws. But this the South Carolina authorities and the mob resolved should not be done.

Mr. Hoar, on arriving at Charleston, accompanied by his daughter, informed the governor of the State,—Mr. Hammond, —by letter, of his arrival, and the purpose of his mission. The letter was immediately sent to the Legislature, where it stirred up the wrath of "the chivalry" to such a degree that the governor was requested to "expel the emissary sent by Massachusetts to South Carolina."

In addition to this, the Legislature passed an act prohibiting any person from coming into the State to disturb or hinder the execution of laws relating to slaves and free persons of color, under penalty of fine and imprisonment.

The people of Charleston became intensely excited, and this excitement soon spread to other parts of the State. The sheriff

of Charleston called on Mr. Hoar, and informed him that the people were highly incensed; that "it was considered a great insult to South Carolina that Massachusetts should send an agent there on such business." The sheriff told him he was in great danger, and had better leave the city as soon as possible. Others, personal friends, gentlemen of character, called upon him to apprise him that he was in personal danger. These warnings came from many, and were earnest and urgent. He was assured that it was impossible for him to remain longer in the city; and in his report to the governor he states "that there was but one question for me to settle; which was, whether I should walk to a carriage or be dragged to it." In this exigency, he consented to leave the city, and was driven to the boat in which he left the State, accompanied by his daughter, whose presence had probably prevented his being mobbed and lynched.

These circumstances, which soon became generally known to members of Congress, made him an object of unusual interest to the members from the free States, except those who at all times and on all occasions sympathized with the slave-owners,—those whom John Randolph dubbed as "dough-faces."

The offensive laws were wiped out only by the blood of the Rebellion. And the free negro who was then imprisoned for entering a harbor in the State now appears in Congress, occupying seats once occupied by a Calhoun, a Hammond, and a McDuffie!

ACQUISITION OF TEXAS.

The greater part of the time was taken up during the second session of the Twenty-eighth Congress by debates upon the acquisition of Texas; while Oregon also came in for a share. These were now the two great questions before the country. The convention which nominated Polk and Dallas had discarded Van Buren because he was not in favor of the immediate annexation of Texas, and at the same time declared our title to the *whole* of Oregon—up to 54° 40′—to be "clear and indisputable."

Mr. Calhoun, as I have shown, was appointed Secretary of State by Mr. Tyler almost solely for the purpose of acquiring Texas at all hazards. Both Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren publicly in their letters on this subject, called out by inter-

rogatories, declared that to annex Texas to the United States without the consent of Mexico would be just cause of war to the latter. "Annexation and war are identical," said Mr. Clay. Nevertheless, during the Presidential campaign the politicians, under the influence of Mr. Calhoun, indulged in their usual mild and persuasive tone, declaring that if the Union would not accept Texas, its annexation to *the Southern States* should be taken into consideration. That final issue should be made up, and the alternative distinctly presented to the free States, either to admit Texas into the Union, or to proceed *peaceably and calmly to arrange the terms of a dissolution of the Union.* "If we are not permitted to bring Texas into our Union peacefully and legitimately, as we now may, then we solemnly announce to the world that we will dissolve this Union sooner than abandon Texas."

Spurring on the people of the South, and being in turn spurred on by them, Mr. Calhoun put forth all his powers and used all his bewildering yet brilliant sophistry to effect the object of his desire. He became the great champion of slavery, as well as the advocate of the acquisition of Texas, defending and justifying it in his voluminous diplomatic correspondence with Mr. King, our minister at Paris, and expressing the highest alarm and indignation that Lord Aberdeen should have said in one of his letters, though disclaiming all intention, either openly or secretly, to resort to any measures that could tend to disturb our internal tranquillity or affect our prosperity, that they, the British government, would not desist from those open and honest efforts which they had constantly made for procuring the abolition of slavery throughout the world.

Mr. Calhoun had already entered into a treaty of annexation with Texas when this very inoffensive sentence was penned by Lord Aberdeen; yet he at once seized upon it as a reason for making the treaty! Mr. Calhoun was greatly shocked that the minister for foreign affairs of England should avow a desire on the part of his government to procure the abolition of slavery throughout the world; forgetting that in the Webster-Ashburton Washington treaty, made only two years before, the United States had entered into a stipulation to aid Great Britain to

put a stop to the slave-trade, and for that purpose to keep war-vessels on the coast of Africa.

The treaty negotiated had been rejected, and another mode of acquiring Texas must be resorted to, of which I shall speak directly. Colonel Benton, in a speech made in the Senate in the presence of Mr. Calhoun, charged the latter with being "the undisputed author and architect" of the war with Mexico. He said that before Texas would yield to the solicitation of the government of the United States, made by Mr. Upshur in 1844, to be annexed to the United States, she demanded to know whether we would, in the event of their acceding to our request, step between them and Mexico, and take the war, which was sure to follow, off their hands. This pledge was required because at the time Texas was applied to by our government to enter into a treaty of annexation an armistice existed, and peace negotiations were going on under the mediation of England and France; and if broken up, war would be the result. To this demand Mr. Upshur, to whom it was addressed, made no reply. Mr. Nelson, Attorney-General, who performed the duties of Secretary of State, temporarily, after Mr. Upshur's death, gave it an answer, positively refusing, in the name of the President of the United States, to take annexation on those terms. "This answer," says Mr. Benton, "was sent to Texas, and put an end to all negotiation for annexation. The Senator from South Carolina (Mr. Calhoun) came into the Department of State, procured the reversal of the President's decision, and gave the pledge to the whole extent that Texas asked it. Without in the least denying the knowledge of the armistice and the negotiations for peace, and all the terrible consequences which were to result from their breach, he accepts the whole, and gives the fatal pledge which his predecessors had refused; and follows it up by sending our troops and ships to fight a people with whom we were at peace,—the whole veiled by the mantle of secrecy, and pretexed by motives [that England was seeking to abolish slavery in Texas] as unfounded as they were absurd."

Mr. Benton says, "The Secretary knew that he had made war with Mexico. . . . I know it, and said it on this floor in

secret session. Senators will recollect it." (Mr. Mangum nodded assent.)

Early in the session a joint resolution was introduced in the House, and there underwent long and able discussion, to admit Texas as a State, as a legislative measure. This resolution was passed, after undergoing amendment and modification. One amendment, submitted by Milton Brown, of Tennessee, provided that the portion of Texas lying north of 36° 30′—the Missouri Compromise line—might be formed into States to be admitted into the Union, with or without slavery, as the people of each State asking admission might desire; the States to be formed out of the other portion—south of 36° 30′—to be entitled to admission under the provisions of the federal Constitution: in other words, as slave States. The ayes and noes on the passage of this resolution in the House were 120 to 97. Every Whig, except five, and these from the South, voted in the negative, as did many Northern Democrats.

The resolution went to the Senate, and was there strenuously opposed and ably discussed. It was understood that it would share the same fate which the treaty had met in that body; and Colonel Benton has informed us that such would have been the case had it not been coupled with a proposition of his own, which was adopted by the Senate and agreed to by the House, as an alternative mode of obtaining Texas.

Mr. Benton's amendment provided that "if the President should deem it advisable, instead of proceeding to submit the foregoing resolution [that of the House] to the republic of Texas, as an overture on the part of the United States for admission, to negotiate with that republic, then," etc.,—his plan being to effect the object by negotiation and treaty,—the terms of admission to be submitted to the Senate; or by articles to be submitted to the two Houses of Congress, as the President might direct. Five members of the Senate, namely, himself, Mr. Tappan, Mr. Fairfield, Mr. Dix, and Mr. Haywood, he states, would not have voted for the House resolution had it not been distinctly understood, first, that Mr. Tyler and his Secretary of State would not take upon themselves to execute this, or these resolutions; and, secondly, that the new President, Mr. Polk,

would adopt Mr. Benton's plan in executing the will of Congress. It was supposed that Mr. McDuffie could answer for the administration, as he was the special friend of Mr. Calhoun; and he was therefore applied to. His answer was emphatic,—that "they would not have the *audacity* to assume to carry these resolutions, or either of them, into effect." The resolution was approved on Saturday, the first day of March: on Monday, the five Senators who were opposed to annexing Texas by the legislative mode learned, to their surprise, that the President, whose term expired that day, had adopted the legislative clause, and sent it off by special messenger to Texas for her adoption. "It was then seen," says Mr. Benton, "that some Senators had been cheated out of their votes, and that the passage of the act through the Senate had been procured by a fraud." As the joint resolution passed the Senate by a very close vote,—27 to 25,—the importance of the five votes, or, indeed, of any one of them, may be seen.

Texas accepted the proposition made to her, and thus she became a part of the United States, a war with Mexico, as had been foreseen and foretold, following immediately.

END OF TYLER'S ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. Tyler's administration came to an end, to the regret of no one, and he departed with his family for his home in Virginia. Few friends were left of all those who fawned around and flattered him when he had offices to bestow. As his power waned, his *friends* (?) diminished, until he found himself enjoying comparative quiet, if not perfect solitude, in the Presidential mansion, and had plenty of leisure to calculate how many real, sincere friends he had made, or had attached themselves to him, during his term of office. He had been beset by hundreds who professed the most devoted attachment to him; who poured out the incense of flattery upon his head until its odors and perfumes intoxicated his brain; but the time came when, one by one, or score by score, they disappeared and were heard of no more. Of these, and their flatteries and artful deceptions, he spoke bitterly in after-years, when he had come to his senses, and expressed regret that he had ever listened to, or been influenced by, them.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Polk inaugurated.—His Inaugural Address.—His Cabinet.—Discards the Globe.—Ritchie brought to Washington and establishes the Union.—Our Relations with Mexico and England.—General Cass declares that "War (with England) is inevitable."—The President declares our Title to the whole of Oregon clear and indisputable.—Mr. Haywood's Speech.—Exciting Scene in the Senate.—Mr. Hannegan anathematizes the President.—Fierce and Angry Discussion.—Mr. Crittenden and Mr. Allen, of Ohio.—Debate on Oregon.—The "Fifty-four Forties."—The President relies on the Whigs to support him in making a Treaty fixing the Boundary of Oregon at Forty-nine Degrees.—A Treaty entered into and ratified, and the Oregon Controversy settled.—Mr. Adams and Mr. Rhett.—Interesting Unwritten History from Mr. Adams.—Debate upon, and Passage of, the Tariff of 1846.—Mr. Dallas votes for the Tariff of '46, and the consequent Repeal of the Tariff of '42.—Senator Haywood resigns, and issues an Address to the People of North Carolina.—Mr. Sawyer's Lunch.—Mr. Robinson.—A Speech from Mr. Sawyer produces Great Merriment in the House.—War with Mexico.—The False Preamble.—General Scott's "Hasty Plate of Soup" Letter.—Acquisition of New Mexico and California.—Campaign on the Rio Grande.—Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca.—Monterey taken.—Second Session of the Twenty-ninth Congress.—The Lie, and a Challenge given.—Davis and Bailey.—A Duel expected.—Death of General Barrow.—Scene in the Senate.—The Davis and Bailey Difficulty settled.—The Three-Million Bill.—A Beautiful Incident: Respect for Mr. Adams.—The Public Printer excluded from the Senate.——Debate on the Three-Million Bill.—Mr. Corwin's Speech.—"Tom Corwin."—Debate on the Three-Million Bill in the House.—James F. Simmons.—Mr. Calhoun's Slavery Resolutions.—Notice of Outgoing Senators.—Battle of Buena Vista.—General Scott's Career in Mexico.—The Whig National Convention of 1848.—General Taylor and Millard Fillmore nominated for President and Vice-President.—Death of John Quincy Adams.—Democratic National Convention.—General Cass and General Butler nominated for President and Vice-President.—Free-Soil Buffalo Convention nominates Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams for President and Vice-President.—The Presidential Election.—Taylor and Fillmore elected.—Proposition to extend the Constitution over California.—Earnest Debate in the Senate.—Last Night of the Thirtieth Congress.—Scenes in the House.—Close of Mr. Polk's Administration.—His Death.

MR. POLK INAUGURATED.—HIS CABINET.

JAMES K. POLK took the oath of office and delivered his inaugural address on Tuesday, the 4th of March, 1845. If the Constitution had provided any mode by which to contest a

Presidential election, such was the firm conviction that this had been effected by fraudulent votes, that it is probable this election would have been contested. But no such mode has been provided. No matter by what palpable frauds Presidential electors are elected in any State, there is no way of contesting their election, or of proving before a tribunal competent to try the case the fact that they were not really elected.

Mr. Polk's inaugural was of unusual length, as he took upon himself to give his views, generally, upon the character and the objects of our government,—to eulogize our system of self-government, to extol the blessings of liberty, and to express his regret that sentiments should be entertained and propagated in one part of the country hostile and injurious to the domestic institutions of another part, thus threatening the peace and harmony of all. He presented his views also, briefly, on the subject of a tariff, giving clear indications that he was opposed to protection.

Mr. Polk reiterated, in his inaugural address, the political clap-trap declaration of the convention which nominated him; namely, that "our title to the country of the Oregon is clear and indisputable:" a great mistake; for, first, how could our title to a country in the joint occupancy of England and the United States, under solemn treaties, and, secondly, which was disputed by England, be clear and indisputable? Besides, as *clear* and *indisputable* rights cannot be allowed to become the subject of negotiation without dishonor to the nation having such rights, and as Mr. Polk was compelled to negotiate with England in regard to this very "*indisputable title*," he tied his own hands, or rather set his foot down on a line from which he was compelled to recede, and no nation or potentate can do that without more or less humiliation and dishonor.

But the declaration of the Baltimore Convention, and Mr. Polk's injudicious re-utterance of it, gave rise to the party shibboleth, belched forth from every groggery in the North and West, and placarded by striplings with chalk upon fences and dead walls, "54° 40′ OR FIGHT!"—a cry more easily got up than satisfied.

THE NEW CABINET.

The following gentlemen constituted Mr. Polk's cabinet, namely:

James Buchanan, Secretary of State; Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury; William L. Marcy, Secretary of War; George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy; Cave Johnson, Postmaster-General; John Y. Mason, Attorney-General.

Mr. Mason was the only member of Mr. Tyler's cabinet retained.

Mr. Calhoun and his friends expected he would be retained as Secretary of State, and the "Charleston Mercury," understood to speak his sentiments, accounted for his being left out by the allegation of the New York politicians, that that State could be carried only by sacrificing him, and he was sacrificed accordingly. If this were true, it afforded another evidence of the very sincere *friendship* which existed between Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Van Buren. The latter was killed off at Baltimore by the adoption of the two-thirds rule, moved by Mr. Romulus M. Saunders, of North Carolina, a friend of Mr. Calhoun, and carried by Mr. Calhoun's friends,—or, at any rate, by the Southern delegates. Mr. Calhoun was now receiving his pay by installments, indirectly from the hands of Mr. Van Buren. If such an intimation as the "Charleston Mercury" speaks of were given to Mr. Polk during the canvass, it is evident, from the subsequent throwing Mr. Calhoun overboard, that a sort of bargain was entered into, to the effect that the vote of New York should be given to Mr. Polk in consideration that he should discard Mr. Calhoun. Hence we see why such stupendous frauds were resorted to to carry the State, and Silas Wright consented to be the candidate for Governor.

But it seems that this was not the only bargain entered into by Mr. Polk to secure his election: that while he bargained with Mr. Van Buren and his friends to sacrifice Mr. Calhoun to secure the vote of New York, he at the same time bargained with a friend of Mr. Calhoun that, in consideration that the vote of South Carolina should be cast for him, he would discard Mr. Blair, the friend of Mr. Van Buren, and the able editor of the

"Globe," who should no longer be the organ of the government. This bargain, too, was faithfully adhered to, Mr. Ritchie, of Richmond, being brought here as the editor of the "Union," the new government paper! It was the play of "Who's the Dupe?" One thing was certain, the people of Pennsylvania had been duped, and that, too, by Mr. Buchanan, who had now got his reward, the office of Secretary of State.

Mr. Benton, the consistent friend of Mr. Van Buren, and the warm personal friend of Mr. Blair, has given us a brief account of the little piece of political legerdemain relating to Mr. Blair and the "Globe." From him we learn that in the month of August, 1844, a prominent citizen of South Carolina, and a fast friend of Mr. Calhoun, visited Mr. Polk at his residence in Tennessee. So much was known to the world at the time, and that this friend of Mr. Calhoun was Mr. Pickens. The ostensible object of his visit was given out to be to ascertain Mr. Polk's views in regard to the tariff policy; and it was proclaimed that they were perfectly satisfactory to this South Carolina gentleman. But Mr. Benton has given us the real object of this visit, which was to make known to Mr. Polk the condition upon which he could have the electoral vote of South Carolina; namely, that he should discontinue Mr. Blair as the organ of the government in case of his election. Colonel Benton says, "The electoral vote of the State, being in the hands of the General Assembly, and not in the people, was disposable by the politicians. Mr. Polk was certain of the vote of the State if he agreed to the required condition; and he did so. Mr. Blair was agreed to be given up. That was propitiation to Mr. Calhoun, to whom Mr. Blair was obnoxious on account of his inexorable opposition to nullification and its author."

And now we learn a little more, through Mr. Benton, of Mr. Polk's bargains and management. He seems to have been a skillful player of legerdemain. Mr. Tyler, being a candidate, might take some votes from Mr. Polk, enough, where the two parties were nearly balanced, to give the vote to Mr. Clay; and it was important for him to get Mr. Tyler not only to withdraw, but also to throw the weight of his official influence in his, Mr. Polk's, favor. How was this to be done? Mr. Blair was

as obnoxious to Mr. Tyler, on account of his determined hostility to him and his administration, as he was to Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Tyler would not withdraw so long as the "Globe" kept up its warfare upon him. It became Mr. Polk's interest, therefore, to silence the "Globe," and to effect this he wrote to General Jackson, who had unbounded influence over Mr. Blair. Very soon after this Mr. Tyler publicly withdrew as a Presidential candidate, and "The Madisonian," the organ of his administration, thenceforward supported Mr. Polk. Colonel Benton says, "The inference is irresistible, that the consideration of receiving the vote of South Carolina, and of getting Mr. Tyler out of the way of Mr. Polk, was the agreement to displace Mr. Blair as government editor if he should be elected."

As Colonel Benton was one of the most prominent men of the Democratic party, a very close and shrewd observer of men and their doings, could thread a labyrinth of politics and political manœuvres with great skill, we may rely on his representation of, and conclusions in regard to, these various bargains.

"The 'Globe,'" says Colonel Benton, "was sold and was paid for: it was paid for out of public money,—the same fifty thousand dollars which were removed to the village bank at Middletown, in the interior of Pennsylvania." He says, "Three annual installments made the payment, and the Treasury did not reclaim the money for three years."

There was much squabbling and bickering among the aspirants for cabinet offices and their friends. Mr. Saunders, of North Carolina, the friend of Calhoun,—he who managed to make Hendricks B. Wright, of Pennsylvania, president of the convention which nominated Mr. Polk, and thereby secured the adoption of the two-thirds rule, which slaughtered Mr. Van Buren,—was an aspirant for the office of Secretary of the Navy. Failing to obtain that, he fell back upon the Postmaster-Generalship. But here he was met and beaten by Mr. Cave Johnson, of Tennessee, and finally got nothing but the consciousness that he was the man that did it,—that *he* defeated the nomination of Mr. Van Buren and secured that of Mr. Polk. So fared it with Mr. Calhoun and his friends, "the chivalry of the South," and not much better with Mr. Van Buren and his

friends. True, New York had a seat in the cabinet in the person of Mr. Marcy, but he belonged to the "Old Hunker" wing of the party, while Mr. Van Buren and Silas Wright belonged to the "Barnburners," and the "Barnburners" had carried the State.

OUR RELATIONS WITH MEXICO AND ENGLAND.

In consequence of the passage by Congress of the resolutions of annexation, and their acceptance by Texas, Mexico withdrew her minister, General Almonte, from the United States, and ceased to hold any diplomatic intercourse with Mr. Shannon, the United States minister at Mexico, who returned home. War, of course, must follow, and General Taylor was ordered first to Corpus Christi, and then farther west, to the Rio Grande, with what was termed an "army of occupation."

Meantime, our relations with Great Britain were far from being satisfactory. Mr. Calhoun had, under President Tyler, entered upon negotiations with Mr. Packenham, the British minister, with a view to settle our claims to the Oregon country. Mr. Calhoun had offered the line of 49° as the boundary between the two countries, which was declined, and an offer made to refer the question of boundary to an arbitrator. This was peremptorily declined by Mr. Calhoun; and thus stood the case when Mr. Polk, with more party zeal than wise statesmanship, declared in his inaugural that our title to Oregon, understood to mean up to 54° 40′, was "clear and indisputable." This by no means tended to conciliate England, or to smooth the way for a peaceable settlement of the question; and the party-cry of "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" only tended to produce irritation in England and to nail Mr. Polk's feet to that line.

Nevertheless, Mr. Buchanan, by Mr. Polk's orders, offered the line of 49°; but subsequently he withdrew that offer. Of course the negotiation made no progress during the summer. The country was much agitated by the apprehension of a war with England, and mercantile affairs were greatly disturbed.

At the opening of Congress, the President, speaking of the

acquisition of Texas, said, in his message, that "this accession to our territory has been a bloodless achievement." It proved to be otherwise. "Our army," he said, "was ordered to take a position in the country between the Nueces and the Rio del Norte, and to repel any *invasion* [!] of Texas which might be attempted by Mexico; our squadron in the Gulf was ordered to co-operate with the army."

General Taylor, with about two thousand troops, landed at Aransas Bay, July 26. The country west of Corpus Christi up to that moment was in the quiet occupation of the Mexicans; not a single United States Texan was, or ever had been, in that part of the country. The Mexicans fled before our army, driving their flocks and herds before them, and leaving their habitations behind them. An old fort, or stockade, occupied by Mexican troops, was abandoned, and the latter crossed the Rio del Norte. And this was the country our troops were ordered to protect against any attempted *invasion* by Mexican forces! Instead of being an "army of observation," ours was an "army of invasion." But we had *might*, and that makes *right*. Had England or France owned that country, our army would never have been ordered to take possession of it. We might bluster about Oregon, and beat our gongs of "fifty-four forty," but we took good care to send no army there to take possession of the country in dispute. Mr. Polk, in his annual message, reiterated the assertion that *our title to the whole of Oregon Territory could be maintained by irrefragable proofs;* plunging himself deeper in the morass of diplomatic complications and inconsistencies at every step; assuming a lofty attitude, only to suffer the greater humiliation when he came to *back down*, and to be taunted by his own political friends when he was compelled to do so.

But England would not submit quietly to bluster and bullying. Mr. Calhoun had in January proposed the line of 49° as the dividing line; but Mr. Polk's indiscreet declaration in his inaugural put them upon their mettle and aroused their anger. After waiting some time in expectation that the negotiation would be renewed by the British minister, and finding this not likely to take place, Mr. Buchanan took the initiative, and

commenced where Mr. Calhoun had left the negotiation, again offering the line of 49°. This was again refused, and the fact that that line had been offered getting wind, the Democracy were in great commotion and highly exasperated. To quiet the storm the offer was withdrawn, and Mr. Polk made the declaration in his annual message I have stated. He was in a dilemma. The rank and file had taken the business of managing the affairs of the government into their own hands, and Mr. Polk stood in fear of them. If our title to the whole of Oregon was "clear and indisputable," why had he offered to accept 49° as our line? And why did he, after withdrawing this offer, and again declaring our title clear and unquestionable, sign a treaty giving Great Britain all that portion lying north of 49°, —that is, five and a half degrees?

Early in the session General Cass introduced resolutions in the Senate instructing the military and naval committees to inquire into the condition of the army, militia, navy, fortifications, and means of offense and defense generally, of the country. He took the occasion to make some remarks in regard to our foreign relations, and spoke in a tone calculated to excite alarm. "Under the circumstances in which the country is placed," he said, "we may well ask, Watchman, what of the night?" Being interrogated by Mr. Crittenden as to his opinion of the probability of hostilities with England, he replied, "My opinion, if the Senator desires to hear it, is that we are almost on the verge of war;" for he believed England would persist in her claim to Oregon, and we could not surrender any portion of it.

Mr. Crittenden.—"This is a momentous announcement. The conclusion the honorable Senator has come to is, that war is inevitable."

This was the opening of an exciting and, at times, inflammatory debate on the Oregon question, which lasted, with intervals, for months.

There were "the fifty-four forties" in the Senate and House, or those who were rampant for the whole of Oregon or war, headed by Mr. Allen, Mr. Hannegan, and Mr. Cass, in the Senate; and there were those who were for settling the ques-

tion by adopting the line of the forty-ninth degree of north latitude. Of these, among the Democrats, were Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Benton, Mr. Haywood, Mr. McDuffie, Mr. Dix, and several others. Mr. Allen and Mr. Hannegan were especially loud and denunciatory in their speeches against all who were not for insisting on "fifty-four forty." Mr. Allen, in his boisterous discussion of the subject, declared that they must "prepare the hearts of the people for war." Yet in the course of his remarks he said Great Britain *dared* not go to war with the United States; thus doing all in his power to provoke her to hostilities.

General Cass spoke often upon this subject, and always in the tone and with the look of an alarmist. He concurred with his friend Allen, though the phrase used had excited much unfavorable comment and even ridicule, that "they must prepare the hearts of the people for WAR." General Cass had frequently said that "war was inevitable," and was often rallied by Senators on account of his "war's alarms" and his "*inevitable*" war; for which he became as notorious as Mr. Allen had made himself by "preparing the hearts of the people for war." General Cass was apt to get quite earnest whenever he spoke on the Oregon question, and almost invariably would use the word "inevitable," creating a smile or laugh in the Senate. On one of these occasions, on rising, he said he was not going to make a war speech, nor use the word "inevitable," but soon let fly the "inevitable war," and was reminded of his expression by a general laugh; joining in the laugh, he said, "Well, I will not say 'inevitable war,' but 'inevitable collision.'"

In some remarks which fell from Mr. Webster, he alluded to the opinion of the Senator from Michigan, that "war was inevitable."

General Cass, rising and explaining pleasantly.—"I never said war was inevitable. What I did say, and what I now say, is, that if we go on and give the notice to abrogate the treaty of joint occupation and take armed occupation of the country, and England does not yield, then war must follow."

Mr. Webster.—"Does the Senator believe that we shall give the notice and take armed occupation of the country?"

Mr. Cass.—"Most certainly."

Mr. Webster.—"Does the Senator believe that England will yield?"

Mr. Cass.—"By no means."

Mr. Webster.—"Does the Senator believe that England will surrender the whole of Oregon under any circumstances?"

Mr. Cass.—"No; I am confident she will not."

Mr. Webster.—"Then, according to the Senator's views of the subject, war *is* inevitable." But he himself took a more hopeful view: he did not believe war was inevitable, or that it would result from our controversy with England on this subject; he had too much confidence in the prudence and sound judgment of both governments to suppose they were about to involve the two nations in a war about a matter so easily to be settled and of so little moment.

A few days after this, a very extraordinary debate and scene took place in the Senate, which many remember to this day, when all who took part in it, save one,—Mr. Allen,—have long since "slept with their fathers."

Mr. Haywood, of North Carolina, who was the intimate personal as well as the political friend of Mr. Polk, and was supposed to speak his sentiments on the great question which then occupied so much of the time of the Senate and House, addressed the former body on it.

He rebuked Mr. Allen and others for charging those who did not think proper blindly to follow certain self-constituted leaders, with *treason*, and sticking "BRITISH" on their backs. Such epithets had no terrors for him.

Mr. Haywood commented upon the declaration of Mr. Allen, that Great Britain would not fight us single-handed for Oregon. He said he should have a very different opinion of the President from what he now had, if the idle dream had ever entered his head that Great Britain *dared* not fight for that portion north of 49°.

Mr. Hannegan rose, laboring under excited feelings. Before replying to some parts of the extraordinary speech of the Senator from North Carolina,—the most extraordinary he had ever listened to,—he desired to put a question to him, which he had in writing. He wished to know of the Senator whether he had

authority from the President, direct or indirect, for placing the construction upon his language which he had placed.

Mr. Haywood replied that he had said in his speech that the President could not authorize any man to speak for him.

Mr. Hannegan.—"Sir, there is no truth in man nor meaning in words if the President is not committed to 54° 40′. It is as true as the Holy Book."

He quoted several of Mr. Polk's expressions, and read from a letter of his, dated April 23, 1844, to a committee of the citizens of Cincinnati, to prove that he was for the *whole* of Oregon; charged Mr. Haywood with attacking Senators here, and with volunteering a defense against attacks never made. If the President should surrender the banner which was put into his hands by the Baltimore Convention, he would prove himself recreant to his professions, recreant to the party, and recreant to the country. But he denied for the President the intentions which the Senator attributed to him. The Senator had said he (the President) had stuck in, parenthetically, what would tickle the ears of the people, but that it meant nothing. If this were true, it must be brought to the light; and if not true, what had not the Senator to answer for! If it were true, "the President would be doomed to an infamy so profound, a damnation so deep, that the TRUMPET-CALL OF THE RESURRECTION COULD NEVER REACH HIM!"

It may well be supposed that all this heated language—these taunts and thrusts—could not be uttered without creating much sensation in the Senate. It was an encounter between members of the same political family,—but it was with keen weapons wielded by strong arms, and the cuts and thrusts were no child's play.

This debate, so fierce and angry, so inflammatory and denunciatory, created a gulf between the "fifty-four forties" and the President, and greatly excited "the whole-or-none" Oregon men out of Congress. But at the same time it allayed apprehensions of a war, and thus had a salutary influence on trade and commerce.

Mr. Reverdy Johnson followed Mr. Hannegan, with remarks well calculated to allay public apprehension.

"We have all felt," said Mr. Johnson, "that at one time (I trust that that time is now past) we were in imminent danger of war. From the moment the President deemed it right and becoming, in the outset of his official career, to announce to the world that our title to Oregon was clear and unquestionable, down to the period of his message to Congress in December last, when he reiterated the declaration, I could not see how it was possible that war could be averted. That apprehension was rendered much more intense from the character of the debates elsewhere, as well as from the speeches of some of the President's political friends within this chamber. I could not but listen with alarm and dismay to what fell from the very distinguished and experienced Senator from Michigan [Mr. Cass] at an early period of this debate; to what I heard from the Senator from Indiana [Mr. Hannegan]; and, above all, to what was said by the Senator from Ohio [Mr. Allen], the chairman of the committee on foreign relations, who, in my simplicity, I supposed must necessarily be apprised of the views of the government in regard to the foreign concerns of the country. Supposing the condition of the country to be what it was represented to be by these three Senators, I could not see how war was to be avoided, and I was accordingly prepared to say, on the hypothesis of the fact assumed by the Senator from Michigan, that 'war *was* inevitable.'

* * * * * * * *

"I now rejoice in hoping and believing that the fears of the Senate, as well as my own apprehensions, were, as I think, unfounded."

In this debate, though on a previous day, in reference to the declaration of Mr. Allen that *he* was committed by the Baltimore Convention in regard to our title to the whole of Oregon, Mr. J. M. Clayton commented with just severity upon the idea that resolutions adopted by a political convention—resolutions drawn up without thought, by persons wholly ignorant of the subject, and mostly for "buncombe," adopted without the least discussion, by acclamation, not one in fifty knowing or caring what they were or really meant—could be of binding force upon grave Senators sitting in judgment

upon the great interests of the nation and deciding questions of peace or war! What did the members of the Baltimore Convention know about our title to Oregon? What did they know about the consequences that might result from our claiming the whole of Oregon and persisting in our claim?

Mr. Clayton felt it his duty to notice the extraordinary remarks indulged in by the Senator from Ohio, whose position as chairman of the first committee in the first legislative body in the world gave consequence to what he said. These remarks would be spread upon the wings of the wind; they would be carried to England, and be translated and published in France and other European countries. He had here in this grave and dignified body indulged himself in the most violent denunciations of England,—had proclaimed that she was weak and helpless, that she was about to fall to pieces for want of strength to stand, and had used language calculated not only to excite feelings of hostility among the American people towards her, but to provoke the same kind of feelings in the breasts of her people towards us. If they had any pride, as we well know they have, what would be their feelings when they hear that an American Senator rises in this body, and, after using towards them the most irritating language, taunts them with being weak and imbecile, and gravely declares that they *dare* not go to war with us, because they are no match for us! This strain of remark was probably intended to "prepare the hearts of the people for war," as the Senator some time ago declared ought to be done; but if it prepared the hearts of our people for war, it was equally well calculated to prepare the hearts of the people of England for war with us.

MR. CRITTENDEN AND MR. ALLEN.

A brief but pungent encounter, which can never be forgotten by any one present, occurred in the Senate on the occasion of the adoption by that body of resolutions, introduced by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, giving notice to England of the abrogation of the treaty of joint occupation of Oregon.

Mr. Allen was violently opposed to the terms of the resolutions, pronouncing them tame, wanting in spirit, and un

worthy of an American Senate. He spoke often in opposition, and in a lofty, imperious, dogmatical, and blustering style, excessively offensive to the body generally. He had for some time past assumed a very arrogant manner, making himself more and more offensive from day to day by his intolerable assumption; but on this occasion he had been more than usually imperious and blustering, until Senators, thus hectored and lectured, could stand it no longer.

Mr. Crittenden rose, while Mr. Clayton and one or two others were preparing to do so, and spoke in terms of indignant and caustic rebuke of Mr. Allen's arrogance and lofty assumptions. He desired to know who gave *him* warrant to lecture Senators and read lessons of duty and patriotism to them? Where did he find authority for questioning their honesty and pronouncing their action unpatriotic, submissive to England, and unworthy of American Senators? "Does the little commission of chairman of the committee on foreign relations raise him so high above all others that he may thus hector them? 'Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed, that he hath grown so great?' Who gave *him* commission to come here and take us to task for the vote we have given? He talks of our resolution being paltry and servile." He would say to the Senator that he neither knew the Senate nor did he seem to know himself. The Senator manifested a degree of arrogance and superciliousness which, for one, he had long impatiently borne, and which no one had a right to assume in that body. For one, he would tell the Senator he would not sit here and be hectored and lectured by him. He had taken upon himself to become the champion of the Senate and of the whole country; but the country must have sunk low indeed when its honor had to be championed by the Senator from Ohio.

I can give but a faint idea of Mr. Crittenden's rebuke. Every word, uttered slowly and deliberately, hit the mark. It was terrible.

Mr. Allen replied, and attempted to be severe and facetious upon Mr. Crittenden,—to raise a laugh at his expense; spoke of his making faces, and of his hope of receiving a little re-

flected honor by assailing him. This only aroused a feeling of anger and scorn. Mr. Crittenden receive reflected honor by rebuking Mr. Allen! The remark only produced a scornful smile and a settled, scowling brow. Mr. Allen said Mr. Crittenden thought he was the Attorney-General of that body, and therefore volunteered on all occasions for its defense, and intimated that he would be none the worse if he were to improve his manners as a Senator.

Mr. Crittenden rejoined, and said he was always ready to improve his manners, and would do so when he could, even if he had to learn from a blackguard. He proceeded, in a subdued tone, with a series of most scathing remarks, which told with terrible effect. Mr. Allen, for a few minutes, endeavored to brave it out; but his head soon sank upon his desk, and he thus remained until several minutes after Mr. Crittenden closed,—an object of commiseration by Senators and the gallery, who, nevertheless, felt that no more than justice had been done.

DEBATE ON OREGON.

The House had already adopted a resolution that notice of the abrogation of the treaty of joint occupation be given to England, accompanied with a resolution declaring that it was not intended thereby to interfere with any negotiations between the two governments, by a vote of 172 to 46, Mr. Adams not exactly leading the fifty-four forties, but being foremost in zeal and action for acquiring exclusive possession of all that part of Oregon south of the forty-ninth degree of latitude. The country, he insisted, belonged to the United States, and it was time for us to take steps to possess it. He found authority for our title in the first chapter of Genesis, 26th, 27th, and 28th verses, and in the 8th verse of the second Psalm; which, at his request, were read by the Clerk. This reference to the Bible to sustain our title to Oregon was something new, and both surprised and amused members; but he made out a pretty good case of it. After all, however, he thought, *occupation* gave the best title to a new country,—occupation, not by nomadic tribes, but by tillers of the earth, husbandmen,—and that was what he wanted. He wished abrogation, so that our hardy go-

ahead pioneers of the West could go there and till the country, —go and make the wilderness blossom as the rose.

The resolutions passed by the House went to the Senate, underwent material alterations, and were then passed—40 to 14. The nays included the extreme 54° 40′ men. The Senate's amendment was concurred in by the House by an increased vote. "Our hardy go-ahead pioneers of the West" were already emigrating to Oregon in large numbers. The way had been opened, and the stream of emigration was setting rapidly to the Pacific.

Mr. Allen desired to offer resolutions embodying and reiterating the "Monroe doctrine" as applicable to Oregon.

Mr. Calhoun objected, and a discussion arose. Mr. Allen said that, as far as he knew, this principle of non-intervention had encountered no opposition from any American.

The debate, proceeding, became warm and earnest, Mr. Allen manifesting much feeling, and speaking in a voice which, for volume and strength, probably far surpassed Stentor's. He spoke of the measure he had brought forward as a Democratic measure and Democratic doctrine.

Mr. Calhoun, on this occasion, gave a brief account of the Monroe declaration of 1823, which had been greatly misconceived and misrepresented,—not going the length generally now supposed.

Mr. John M. Clayton referred to the declaration made by Mr. Allen, that the principle contained in his resolution was a Democratic principle and was to be an article of the Democratic creed. He desired to know when it had been adopted. He would go back to the very origin of the present party, to April, 1826. He found that at that time a resolution was presented in the other House by the member from Delaware, Mr. McLane, which Mr. Clayton read, and which took decided ground against the doctrine of Mr. Monroe, against sending ministers to the Congress of Panama, and against the attempt to interfere with the colonization of this continent by European powers. The resolution took the ground of non-interference, on our part, with the concerns of others. Mr. Clayton said that those who voted for that resolution called themselves

Democrats, and the founders of the modern Democratic party. And who voted for it? Among the yeas he found the names of James Buchanan, now Secretary of State, and James K. Polk, now President, by the grace of this same Democratic party.

It must be borne in mind that Mr. Adams's administration was assailed by the Jackson men for attempting to carry out the Monroe declaration through the Congress at Panama. Mr. Calhoun said in this debate, in reply to General Cass, that if the Monroe declaration was right, the sending of ministers to the Panama Congress was right also, both being based on the same principle.

But now, what was the President to do?—stand upon fifty-four forty and fight, or yield to sound discretion? Colonel Benton says, truly, "The administration was in a quandary (qu'en dirai-je?—what shall I say to it?) when the British government, now directed by Sir Robert Peel instead of Lord John Russell, gave notice that they would accept the line we had offered: namely, 49°." He says, "They [our government] felt that it was just and ought to be accepted. At the same time they had stood upon the platform of the Baltimore Convention, had helped to make it, and were loth to show themselves inconsistent and ignorant; besides, the 'fifty-four forties' were in commotion against it. All the government newspapers, the official organ at Washington City, and the five hundred Democratic papers throughout the Union which followed its lead, were vehement against it. Underhandedly they did what they could to allay the storm that was raging, encouraging Mr. Haywood, Mr. Benton, and others to speak; but the pride of consistency and the fear of reproach kept them in the background, and even ostensibly in favor of fifty-four forty, while encouraging the events that would enable them to settle on forty-nine." What an exhibition of insincerity and equivocation on the part of a national government!

"Mr. Packenham made his offer: it was not a case for delay. It was accepted." But a device was resorted to, suggested by Mr. Benton, to let the President easily down from 54° 40′ to 49°. It was that the President should ask the advice of the Senate upon the articles of a treaty before the negotiation.

"Could this be obtained?" says Mr. Benton. "The chances seemed to be against it. It was an up-hill business: it was a submission to the Whigs with the risk of defeat; for, unless they stood by the President against the dominant division of his own friends, the advice desired would not be given, and the embarrassment of the administration would be greater than ever."

Mr. Benton relates that he had many conferences with the President, who was uneasy and anxious; that he "saw and talked with all the Whig Senators, and saw fully that they intended to *act for their country and not for their party*, and reported to the President that he would be safe in trusting them; that their united voice in favor of the advice, added to that of the minority of the Democratic Senators, would make the two-thirds which were requisite."

A *projet* of a treaty was therefore immediately sent in, with a message from the President asking the advice he desired. For the sake of appearing consistent, he faintly reaffirmed his opinion before expressed about our title to Oregon, but stated that should two-thirds of the Senate *advise* the acceptance of the proposition to agree to the line of 49°, he should conform his action to their advice. Should the Senate decline to give such advice, he should consider it his duty to reject the offer. The whole responsibility of treaty or no treaty, therefore, was thrown upon the Senate. The Senate cheerfully took this responsibility, and, Mr. Benton says, "gave the President a faithful support against HIMSELF, against his cabinet, and against his peculiar friends." There was a hard struggle in the Senate by these "friends," but at the end of two days the vote was taken and the advice given,—38 to 12.

Four days after, the treaty was sent to the Senate and ratified by that body,—41 to 14. During the period the treaty was before the Senate the *organ* of the government at Washington made incessant attacks upon those who favored it, and especially upon Mr. Benton. "It was a new thing under the sun," he says, "to see the Senator daily assailed in the government papers for carrying into effect the wishes of the government,—to see him attacked in the morning for what the President was hurrying him to do the night before." Mr. Benton comments

upon the course of "the fifty-four forties" with great severity, but says, "the conduct of the Whigs was patriotic in preferring their country to their party,—in preventing a war with Great Britain,—and in saving the administration from itself and its friends."

But what a humiliating attitude the President, his cabinet, and his "friends" stood in! In what a morass of embarrassment their ignorance and folly and demagogism had placed them,—the declaration of the Baltimore Convention, and its re-assertion by the President in his inaugural speech, and again in his first annual message! And to what wriggling, what disingenuous, insincere, and crooked expedients, the President was compelled to resort to get out of the quagmire he had, like a simpleton and tricky politician, run into! But, thanks to the *Whigs*, to whom Mr. Benton gives due credit, they saved him from himself and his "peculiar friends," and the country from war.

MR. ADAMS AND MR. RHETT.

The zeal manifested by Mr. Adams in favor of Oregon brought him in antagonism with the South Carolina members, —as he usually was, however; and Mr. Rhett, not remembering past conflicts with the "old man eloquent" which he and others had had, wherein they had invariably come off second best, thought proper to assail him as being and voting against the War of 1812; and when accused of ignorance in not knowing that Mr. Adams was not at that time a member of Congress, and not in this country at the time war was declared, he replied that his course had at all times been such towards the South that when his constituents saw that Mr. Adams had voted one way, they expected to find his vote invariably on the other side. Mr. Rhett endeavored to sustain his charge against Mr. Adams by reading from C. J. Ingersoll's "History of the War," and a letter written by Mr. Adams in 1814 to a Mr. Harris, speaking of the unprepared condition of this country to carry on the war with Great Britain. The extract from Ingersoll's "History" purported to give conversations held by Mr. Adams with the Russian minister, which Mr. Rhett considered conclusive proof of the charge he had made.

When Mr. Rhett had concluded, Mr. Adams rose and gave a history of the conversation alluded to between himself and the Russian minister. He, Mr. Adams, was then minister to Russia; the Emperor Alexander sent his minister to Mr. Adams to say that, as he was then in alliance with England, he greatly regretted the war between the United States and Great Britain, and wished to know whether, if he offered to mediate between them, he thought his mediation would be accepted. Mr. Adams replied that he thought it would, and that he would write to his government, urging its acceptance. In that conversation Mr. Adams spoke of the situation of the United States as a reason why this mediation should be accepted. It was offered, and recommended by Mr. Madison to Congress, and Congress authorized its acceptance. If by recommending this mediation he was to be considered *opposed* to the war, so, then, were Mr. Madison and Congress; but the gentleman from South Carolina did not charge *them* with being *opposed* to the war. [Great sensation in the House, and laughter.] In consequence of this mediation being accepted, and supposing Great Britain would accept it, Mr. Madison appointed three commissioners to repair to the court of St. Petersburg,—Mr. Adams (who was there), Mr. Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Bayard, of Delaware. But Great Britain declined the mediation. She, however, offered to enter into negotiations for peace, which was done, two more commissioners, Mr. Clay and Mr. Russell, having been added to the others. "This is a matter," said Mr. Adams, "which, ignorant as the gentleman from South Carolina admits himself to be, he must know."

Had he (Mr. Adams) been very much *opposed* to the war, it was not probable he would have been appointed as one of the commissioners. For his services as such he was nominated by Mr. Madison, and confirmed by the Senate, as minister to England.

As to the letter, he did write it, and did speak of the unprepared condition of this country to carry on the contest with England; but he said no more, nor as much as Mr. Monroe had said as Secretary of War in his communications to Congress; and he had never heard that *he* (Mr. Monroe) had ever

been charged with being *opposed* to the war. "But if the gentleman from South Carolina had read the *whole* of the letter, he would have found sentiments in it which he could not very well find fault with. Probably he was *ignorant* of this part of the letter. At any rate, he only wished to read that which in his opinion would operate against me. Had he read the whole, he would have seen that I said that, notwithstanding the condition of the country, its honor must be maintained, at whatever hazard, cost, or sacrifice. He did not choose to read this. He makes a false charge against me, and then attempts to maintain it by garbled extracts."

Mr. Adams said that in the treaty with England, negotiated at Ghent, there was an article in regard to indemnification for the slaves taken. It had been frequently the case that he had been arraigned by Southern men as a sort of culprit and for being hostile to their interests. The article he had alluded to he had exerted himself to maintain. Afterwards Great Britain endeavored to evade it, and as minister there it had been his duty to defend and maintain it and protect the interests of the South. Finally, a proposition was made through him to refer this to arbitration, which was accepted, and Alexander agreed upon as the arbitrator. He decreed in favor of the holders of the slaves. The whole of the negotiation was conducted by him as minister to Great Britain and as Secretary of State. Those who chose to refer to it could see whether he had been hostile to the South. The owners of the slaves had received indemnity for them, and such was the feeling then at the South that he was thanked by public meetings held to express their gratitude to him. [Much surprise manifested.] He spoke of a charge of hostility to the South some years ago being made against him by a distinguished member from South Carolina, but that member afterwards came and begged his pardon and acknowledged his error. Had the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Rhett) acted the part of a Christian and a gentleman, when he found he had made a false charge against him he would have retracted it; but instead of doing so he persisted in it.

Mr. Adams was always, on occasions of this sort, extremely

interesting, from the fact that his memory seemed to retain every past event of his life, and he would relate conversations held with crowned heads and men of historic fame, which had taken place long years before, and which were, with the events he would speak of and describe, unwritten—sometimes personal—history. He was invariably, at such times, listened to with the deepest attention by members, who gathered around his seat in great numbers.

The feeling of the House was, on this occasion, strongly in favor of Mr. Adams.

DISCUSSION AND PASSAGE OF THE TARIFF OF 1846.

During the winter and spring of 1846 a number of gentlemen were engaged at the National Hotel, in Washington, where they had quarters provided for them, in preparing a new tariff bill, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury, to supersede the tariff of 1842.

The bill, prepared as I have said, was sent to Congress for its action, and, the Oregon question being disposed of, occupied both branches, the debates being very animated, and its passage contested inch by inch by the Whigs and one or two Democratic Senators from the North. Mr. Niles, Dêmocrat, from Connecticut, spoke against it in the most earnest manner, and with great force of argument, comparing it to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. "Should it become a law, it would depopulate many towns and villages which had sprung up under the operation of the protective policy, and the mechanics and artisans who constitute the population would be driven to seek employment elsewhere, as they were driven from France into England, Holland, and the Low Countries by that revocation, adding vastly to the population of those countries, and building up, or giving an extraordinary impetus to, their manufacturing establishments."

Mr. Niles said he knew that a large majority—nearly, or quite, two-thirds—of the Senate was opposed to the bill, and yet it was to be passed. Such was the party edict.

Mr. Simmons and Mr. Reverdy Johnson each opposed it with more than their usual ability and earnestness; and Mr.

Webster arrayed his great powers against it, and told some plain truths as to the manner in which the bill originated and was to be forced through. But while its opponents were using arguments and eloquence enough to overwhelm it under ordinary circumstances, those who supported it, many of them most unwillingly, could not be drawn into an argument upon it; all discussion on their part was forbidden; the bill could be carried only by party discipline, not by argument; discussion would only weaken the chances of its passage.

Mr. Webster said, "Every interest, the shipping, the mercantile, the manufacturing, the agricultural, all, all, were opposed to it. And who," he exclaimed, with emphasis,—"who is it that call for this measure? Who has come here to urge it? Where did it originate? With the people? No. With any great interest? No. With any class of people? No. But it originated with a few politicians; it had been made the shibboleth of party. If there was any one out-of-doors in favor of it, silence was contagious, for they were as silent as its friends are here.

"But," he said, "the passage of this bill was 'a party shibboleth,' and demanded by king Party; all argument against it was therefore thrown away; its supporters were deaf-mutes."

Mr. Crittenden called attention to the fact that not a Whig Senator would vote for the bill except Mr. Jarnigan, of Tennessee, who, though opposed to it, would vote for it under instructions.

Mr. Jarnigan and others so arranged as to have a tie vote in the Senate on a test-question,—so nearly equally was the Senate divided,—to compel Mr. Dallas, the Vice-President, to give a casting vote, which he did in favor of the bill, and, of course, for the repeal of the tariff of 1842, with which his name had been so closely associated during the canvass of 1844. The bill then passed the Senate,—28 to 27,—Mr. Jarnigan voting in the affirmative, from which time he went out of existence, politically, getting no thanks from the Democrats, and convincing the Whigs that he was not to be relied upon when boldness and decision were demanded by the true interests of the country.

As to Mr. Dallas, what can be said of him? Would he and Mr. Polk have obtained the vote of Pennsylvania, and by that been elected, had the people of that State believed that the "*Democratic* tariff of 1842"—as the Democrats chose to call it—would be killed by his vote? Governor Porter and General Cameron have each answered this question emphatically in the negative.

SENATOR HAYWOOD RESIGNS, AND ISSUES AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Mr. Haywood, of North Carolina, Democrat, being opposed to the repeal of the tariff act of 1842, and finding the passage of the McKay bill, as it was called, was to be made a *party* measure, resigned his seat, and issued an address to the people of his State, in which he declared that while a majority of the Senate were opposed to the bill, its passage was resolved on, and was to be accomplished by a "PARTY DRILL."

MR. SAWYER AND HIS LUNCH.

If there were frequent scenes in the House which called forth angry words and stirred up evil passions, scenes which every good man and patriot most deeply lamented, there were also occasional scenes which put members in the best humor with themselves and everybody else, and gave rise to general merriment. Such a one happened in the House during the heated debate on Oregon and Texas, and served, like a January thaw, to break up the ice-bound outlets of the heart.

There was a member in the House, from some backwoods benighted region in Ohio, by the name of Sawyer. Now, Mr. Sawyer,—the Honorable Mr. Sawyer,—having lived all his life in a plain, backwoods style, on "hog and hominy," or, for a special luxury in the winter, on sausages and corn-bread, and dining regularly at mid-day, found his stomach rebellious against the ways of Washington, and especially the way of dining at supper-time. When mid-day arrived, his appetite gave him notice of the fact, and became clamorous—absolutely unappeasable—for its usual supply. All he could do was to enter into a "compromise" with it by agreeing to

supply it with a sausage or two at *one* o'clock, instead of twelve. And so, regularly at one o'clock P.M. it was his custom to step out of his seat, go to a recess in a window, open a bundle done up in a newspaper, and treat himself to a sausage-lunch, or dinner, make use of a bandana pocket-handkerchief for a napkin, and, after brushing away the crumbs, return to his seat.

Now, surely there was no harm, but much good sense and comfort, in this operation. Still, it was not quite *comme il faut*, —not exactly the *style* in which *Honorable* gentlemen lived; and so a mischievous correspondent of the "New York Tribune,"—since an M.C. himself,—not having the fear of the Honorable Mr. Sawyer before his eyes, but instigated by the love of fun and by a keen perception of incongruities, incontinently told the public how, when, where, and upon what Mr. Sawyer dined. The many thousand readers of the "Tribune" laughed, and, when the paper came to Washington, members of Congress, all but one, laughed too; and that provoked the *one*, who made complaint to the House that he was turned into ridicule and made fun of, and he desired the naughty, malicious, fun-loving correspondent, "RICHELIEU,"—W. E. Robinson,—to be deprived of the privilege of the hall as a reporter. And, to soothe the wounded feelings of the young and tender member, the correspondent was expelled from the floor to the gallery, where he could make as much sport of members as he pleased, and no thanks to any one.

Mr. Sawyer, shortly after this merry scene, figured prominently in a lively debate in the House upon a bill to regulate the appointments to certain offices in the several departments of the United States government in the city of Washington, and for the more general and equal distribution of such appointments among the several States and Territories and in the District of Columbia. The bill was taken up in committee of the whole, and gave rise to some rich and amusing scenes. A portion of the Democrats—the more moderate and rational portion—were opposed to acting on the bill; but the Whigs, anticipating a clapperclawing among their opponents, willing to enjoy the fun, and instigated by the spirit of mischief, voted with the ultras to take up the bill.

Mr. Douglas, of Illinois, opposed the bill, and threw ridicule and opprobrium upon it,—charging the House with acting a solemn farce, inasmuch as the bill was a ridiculous absurdity and could never be carried into effect.

This brought Mr. Rathbun, of New York, chairman of the committee who reported the bill, to his feet, who freely spiced his speech with personal allusions and charges, going on to describe the rush of multitudes to Washington, on the change of every administration, seeking office,—miserable beggars, servile and sycophantic,—as to a great poor-house or asylum for paupers.

Mr. Sawyer resumed the floor, and all ears were open, members predisposed and ready for fun, and expecting something rich and racy. One of Mr. Sawyer's first remarks was that the Old Dominion was all in commotion on account of this bill, expecting, if it passed, as he hoped and expected it would, armies of her lazy drones to be turned out of the warm places they had rested and done nothing in for years,—he didn't know but for generations. This was enough to set the House in a roar, and to wake up the members from Virginia. Mr. Sawyer said he held that "to the victors belong the spoils." That was his doctrine, and the *Democratic* doctrine, too; and therefore they had a right to the offices, and meant to have them. They had at great expense and trouble—very great expense and trouble—[much laughter]—— Well, they might laugh, but everybody knew that they had at very great expense and trouble [renewed laughter] elected Mr. Polk. But now, when they wanted the "spoils," how was it? Why, there were seven hundred and thirty clerks in the offices here, and two hundred and thirty-five of them were Whigs,—yes, sir, bold, daring Whigs!

A member.—"How do you know they are Whigs?"

Mr. Sawyer.—"Don't I know a *Whig* from a *Democrat* as far as I can see him?" (The House in a roar.)

Member.—"How can you tell one from the other?"

Mr. Sawyer.—"Just as easy as you can tell one of your sheep from the other; or just as well as you can tell a race-horse from a work-horse. [Renewed laughter.] A Whig always dresses

up fine, or better than Democrats do, and looks *like* he thought he knew more and was a great deal better than a Democrat: they ain't plain folks *like* we are." (Roars of laughter from all sides, and the galleries.)

Besides, he said, he had a list of every one of them,—all their names,—and had inquired at the departments, and of good Democrats who knew them, and found out each one's politics. There had been only one hundred and twenty-eight turned out; but the rest *has* got to go, anyhow. They had to fight hard for the offices, and they meant to have them. Many a field was red with the blood of their opponents the Whigs, and now when their friends came for their reward they could not get anything,—were told there was no place vacant. There were Whigs in office who had been there five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and some as long as forty years. His constituents came here and were told there was no place for them,—to wait and there would be; and after waiting several months their money was all gone, and he had to pay their bills and lend them money to get home again. (Loud and boisterous laughter.) He had heard some of his Whig friends say they had to lend them money.

A voice from the Whig side of the House.—"Because their own Representative would not."

"Well, I can't lend everybody money," said Mr. Sawyer. "Besides, they ought to be appointed. They worked hard and spent their money to elect Mr. Polk, and what have they got for it?" He then went on to show that Virginia and Maryland, and the District of Columbia, got nearly all the offices, and said he would tell them how it was done,—the *modes operanda*, as his Latin friend Holmes (of South Carolina) said; and he undertook to describe this "*operanda*," to the great amusement of members. He said the papers had made scurrilous attacks on him since he undertook to expose the shameless abuses of West Point Academy and the aristocratic inefficiency of the whole concern. And the papers had attacked Mr. Bancroft, too, because he wanted to get rid of the old drones in the navy (such as Commodore Stewart, Commodore Biddle, Commodore Perry, and others), servile sycophants of power.

Mr. Drumgoole said if the member would give way a moment he would offer an amendment to the bill in accordance with his notions, namely, that to the victors belong the spoils of office. He proposed to amend the bill so as to divide the offices among the States that voted for the successful candidate, in which case Ohio would get none. This kept up the merriment of the House, and Mr. Sawyer soon closed his rambling, disjointed, incoherent talk, rather to the regret of members, who enjoyed this novel kind of speaking, the laughter it provoked, and the fun that grew out of it.

WAR WITH MEXICO.

I have already mentioned the entrance of General Taylor into Texas, his advance from Corpus Christi to the Rio del Norte, or Rio Grande, and the flight of the Mexicans with their herds of cattle on the advance of our army, which did not sustain the assertion of the administration, that Mexico had *invaded* Texas.

One reason for the strong opposition to the annexation of Texas at the North was, that it would bring on a war with Mexico,—that it would be of itself cause of war. But Mr. Polk, flattering himself that Mexico would not dare to enter into a war with the United States, and because hostilities had not been commenced when Congress met in December, boasted in his annual message that "this accession to our territory has been a bloodless achievement." Not so: "the state of war had been produced between the United States and Mexico," says Colonel Benton, "by the incorporation of Texas; hostilities between the two countries were brought on by the advance of the American troops to the left bank of the Rio Grande." Collisions between the troops of the two countries soon occurred, and the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma were fought.

The news of these battles, reaching Washington, created great sensation. The President immediately sent a message to Congress, informing them that "American blood had been spilt upon American soil," and requesting Congress to provide for prosecuting the war. A bill was immediately reported to the House from the committee on military affairs, to authorize

the President to accept the services of volunteers. Much as the Whigs, and some Democrats in Congress, were opposed to the course of the administration in involving the country in hostilities, yet, as hostilities actually existed and battles had been fought, the bill would probably have passed — virtually declaring war — without a dissenting vote, but for an unwarrantable trick of which the Democrats were guilty. Not content with the passage of the bill, a preamble was moved that "Whereas, *by the act of Mexico*, a state of war exists between that government and the United States, therefore," etc.

The purpose of this was to compel the Whigs to vote what everybody knew to be a brazen untruth, or else to vote against the bill and thus incur the odium of refusing reinforcements and supplies for our army in its conflict with Mexico. It is usual to take the vote on the preamble separately from the bill to which it is explanatory, and to separate the two is a parliamentary *right;* but, though the Whigs claimed this right, it was obstinately refused, inasmuch as, if allowed, the Democrats would thereby miss the object they wished to accomplish, namely, to declare the existence of war with Mexico.

This preamble elicited a very acrimonious and stormy discussion, or rather crimination and recrimination, between the two parties, in which the whole subject of the annexation of Texas, and the policy of Tyler and Polk in regard to it, were discussed, and the administration roughly handled. The majority were distinctly charged with asserting a FALSEHOOD when they declared that war existed *by the act of Mexico*. Mr. Benton, one of the leaders of the administration party, had, months before, explicitly declared that the course the government had pursued in acquiring Texas, under the administration of Mr. Tyler, dictated by Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of State, brought about a state of war between Mexico and the United States; "that he, Mr. Calhoun, was the author and architect of the war, and that history would so write him down." How, then, could war exist *by the act of Mexico?*

All but a very few of the Whigs voted for the bill, with the preamble, rather than appear on the record as having voted

against reinforcements and supplies needed by the army, though at the same time protesting against the preamble.

The bill and preamble underwent the same sharp and acrimonious discussion in the Senate as had occurred in the House, the Whig Senators taking the same ground that members of the House had taken, the Vice-President, Mr. Dallas, deciding, as the Speaker had done, that the bill and preamble should not be voted upon separately.

Mr. Calhoun refused to vote at all on the bill, declaring that war could *not* exist constitutionally, because Congress alone could declare war, but had not. He could not, therefore, vote for the preamble, which was not true, nor would he vote against supplies for the army; he could not, therefore, vote at all. Mr. Crittenden, when his name was called, said he voted *ay* to all except the preamble, and on that, NO. Only two Senators voted in the negative,—John Davis, of Massachusetts, and Thomas Clayton, of Delaware. Fourteen Whigs in the House voted against the bill.

Upon the passage of the bill and preamble, the President issued his proclamation, announcing that "by the act of Mexico a state of war exists between that government and the United States;" and this was the only declaration of war made by the United States. It was now seen why the President insisted upon the passage of the preamble; namely, that Congress should, if it did not declare war, announce to the world its existence, and thus legalize all warlike acts and measures on our part.

But while the President desired this action by Congress, neither he nor his cabinet believed there would be any serious hostilities; and the former was not only disappointed in the patriotic resistance of the Mexicans, but woefully perplexed and worried by the unexpected continuance of the war.

It has been stated that Colonel Benton charged Mr. Calhoun with producing the state of war; but, though he makes this charge, he says Mr. Calhoun was, nevertheless, "sincerely opposed to it,—always deluding himself, even while creating the *status belli*, with the belief that money, and her own weakness, would induce Mexico to submit and yield to the incor-

poration of Texas without forcible resistance; which would certainly have been the case if the United States had proceeded gently by negotiation. He had dispatched a messenger to offer a douceur of ten millions of dollars at the time of signing the treaty of annexation two years before, and he expected the means repulsed then to be successful now, when the incorporation should be effected under an act of Congress. Had he remained in the cabinet, as he desired, his labors would have been earnestly directed to that end; but his associates who co-operated with him in getting up the Texas question for the Presidential election, and to defeat Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Clay, had war in view from the beginning; and as these associates were now in the cabinet, and he was not, their power increased; his was gone. Claims upon Mexico, and speculations in Texas land and scrip, were with them an additional motive, and required a war, or a treaty under the menace of war or at the end of a war, to make these claims and speculations available. Mr. Robert J. Walker had the reputation of being at the head of this class."

This last sentence of Colonel Benton's is a pregnant one, freighted with meaning; and I shall give it an interpretation directly.

Mr. Benton says, "It is impossible to conceive of an administration less warlike or more intriguing than that of Mr. Polk. They were men of *peace*, with objects to be accomplished by means of *war;* so that war was a necessity and indispensable to their purpose, but they wanted no more of it than would answer their purpose. They wanted a small war, just large enough to require a treaty of peace, and not large enough to make military reputations dangerous for the Presidency. Never were men at the head of a government less imbued with military spirit or more addicted to intrigue. . . .

"How to manage the war was a puzzle. Defeat would be ruin: to conquer vicariously [that is, by *Whig* generals] would be dangerous. Another mode must be fallen upon, and that seemed to have been devised before the declaration was resolved upon, and to have been relied upon for its immediate termination,—for its conclusion within ninety or one hundred

and twenty days, which had been so confidently fixed for its term. This was nothing less than the restoration of the exiled Santa Anna to power, and the purchase of a peace from him."

So that the return of Santa Anna, and his restoration to power, and his expected friendship, were part of the means relied on for obtaining peace from the beginning. This knowledge, subsequently obtained, enabled Mr. Benton to comprehend the reliance which was placed on the termination of the war in ninety or one hundred and twenty days. It was the arrangement with Santa Anna! we to put him back in Mexico, and he to make peace with us,—of course an agreeable peace. But Santa Anna was not a man to promise anything, whether intending to fulfill it or not, without receiving a consideration; and in this case some millions of dollars were required. This explains the application made to Congress by the President before the end of its session for an appropriation of two millions as a means of terminating the war. On the 4th of August a confidential message was communicated to the Senate, informing them that he had made fresh overtures to Mexico for negotiation of a treaty of peace, and asking for an appropriation of two millions to enable him to treat with the better prospect of success, and even to pay the money when the treaty should be ratified in Mexico, without waiting for its ratification by our own Senate.

"A similar communication was made to the House on the 8th day of August. The dates are all in a cluster,—Santa Anna landing at Vera Cruz on the 8th, arriving at the capital on the 15th,—the President's messages informing the Senate that he had made overtures of peace, and asking the appropriations to promote it, being dated the 4th and 8th of the same month. The fact was, it was known at what time Santa Anna was to leave Havana for Mexico, and the overture was made and the appropriation asked for just at the proper time to meet him. The appropriation was not voted by Congress, and at the next session the application for it was renewed, increased to *three* millions,—the same to which Mr. Wilmot offered that *proviso* which took his name."

But let us hear further from Mr. Benton on this novel and interesting subject.

He says, "An intrigue for *peace*, through the restored Santa Anna, was, then, a part of the *war* with Mexico from the beginning. They were simultaneous concoctions. The war was made to get the peace. Ninety to one hundred and twenty days was to be the limit of the war, and that pacifically all the while, and to be terminated by a good treaty of indemnities and acquisitions. . . .

"It was certainly a most unmilitary conception; and infinitely silly, as the event proved. Santa Anna, restored by our means and again in power, only thought of himself and how to make Mexico his own after getting back. He took the high military road. He roused the war spirit of the country, raised armies, placed himself at their head, issued military proclamations, and displayed the most exaggerated hatred to the United States,—the more so, perhaps, to cover up the secret of his return. He gave the United States a year of bloody and costly work! many thousands killed, many more dead of disease, many millions of money expended. Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, Chapultepec, were the fruits of his return! honorable to the American arms, but costly in blood and money."

Mr. Benton indulges in some severe reflections, which arise naturally out of the extraordinary transactions he relates.

I have chosen to copy his account of the declaration of the war with Mexico, and the intrigue which, if he is to be relied upon, was a part of it, because it casts severe censure upon an administration the head of which was elected by, or belonged to, the party of which he (Mr. Benton) had for many years been a prominent leader. It is a damaging record for Mr. Polk and Mr. Walker.

The following is Santa Anna's pass:

"NAVY DEPARTMENT, May 13, 1846.

"(Private and Confidential.)

"COMMODORE,—If Santa Anna endeavors to enter the Mexican ports, you will allow him to pass freely.

"Respectfully yours,

"GEORGE BANCROFT.

"Commodore DAVID CONNOR, *Commanding Home Squadron.*"

Colonel Benton spoke of "claims upon Mexico, and speculations in Texas land and scrip."

Great speculations were made in these; fortunes accumulated by the knowing ones who had money to purchase, for a song, what must rise several thousand per cent. by the acquisition of Texas. Mr. Walker, if living, could probably furnish a list of many who realized large profits out of Texas scrip.

GENERAL SCOTT'S HASTY-PLATE-OF-SOUP LETTER.—FIRE IN THE REAR.

General Scott, as commander-in-chief of the army, claimed the privilege, or right, of being ordered to the scene of war in command of the armies in the field; but there seemed to be a great reluctance on the part of the Secretary of War, Mr. Marcy, or of the administration, to give him the orders he desired. Perhaps, as Mr. Benton has said, they did not want a war that would make military reputations; or perhaps they were counting on its being closed in "ninety or one hundred and twenty days" through the intrigues of Santa Anna. However, a sharp and rather angry correspondence took place between General Scott and the Secretary of War. In replying to one of the Secretary's letters, the general commenced thus:

"SIR,—Your letter of this date, received about six o'clock P.M., as I sat down to take a hasty plate of soup, demands a prompt reply," etc.

The "hasty plate of soup" expression struck the ear as something new, created much laughter, and sadly damaged the gallant and patriotic general by the fun made of it.

In another letter addressed to the Secretary, he spoke of not wishing to "have a fire in his rear [in Washington] while he met a fire in front from the Mexicans." In other words, while fighting the Mexicans in front, he did not wish to be attacked in the rear by those whose duty it was to give him all the support in their power.

After the war had fairly opened on the Rio Grande, General Scott became urgent in his demands to be sent to Mexico, with reinforcements to conduct it, claiming this as his right as commander-in-chief. But it was not the policy of the Secretary of

War or of the President to send another Whig general there, who should cover himself with military laurels.

Eventually his presence in Mexico as commander-in-chief became a necessity, and he was reluctantly ordered there with a force wholly distinct from the army under General Taylor, though composed in part of some of General Taylor's troops, —the administration being compelled to "conquer vicariously," as Colonel Benton expressed it, having no Democratic general competent to take command and conduct the war.

ACQUISITION OF NEW MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA.

Colonel Kearney, an able officer of the United States army, was directed to accept the services of volunteers in Missouri and to lead an expedition to New Mexico to conquer it. He did so, and obtained possession of it without firing a gun.

Dollars, not bullets, it was said, opened the way for Colonel Kearney to Santa Fé, where the United States flag was hoisted, the province taken possession of, and the authority of the United States established.

This accomplished, Colonel Kearney pressed on, in fulfillment of his orders, to California.

This portion of the Mexican nation was in a state of revolt. There was a design, or it was so rumored, among the leading Californians to surrender the country to the British. This did not suit the views of the Americans (from the United States), of whom a considerable number were settled there, and more were expected, chiefly from Missouri. At their solicitation, Captain Fremont, who was there in a scientific capacity and as an explorer, placed himself at their head, and committed acts of war, although the existence of war between the United States and Mexico was not then known there. Hearing of Captain Fremont's doings, Commodore Sloat, who had been lying in the harbor of Monterey for several days, and supposed Fremont was acting under orders from Washington, took the town and fort of Monterey, and raised the American flag over the fort. He then sent for Captain Fremont, who soon joined him with his mounted force, all excellent marksmen and armed with rifles. Commodore Sloat was much surprised to learn that

Fremont had no orders from the government, but had acted on his own responsibility. He had therefore taken Monterey without authority, and might incur the censure of his government for an act of hostility in time of peace. The commodore resolved to return to the United States, and did so, leaving Captain Stockton in command of the squadron.

Captain Stockton was a daring man, fearing no responsibility, and just the one to act with Fremont in such a crisis. By their united efforts California was secured to the United States. In due time Colonel Kearney arrived with his command in California, and there was a contest for command between him, Stockton, and Fremont. On the arrival of Colonel Kearney, a sharp conflict arose between these three ambitious officers as to their relative rank, not very creditable to them or to the government. But Captain Stockton and Colonel Kearney both left the country in a short time for other and more legitimate spheres of action.

It would undoubtedly have been very gratifying to the British government to acquire possession of California, with the city of San Francisco and its splendid harbor; but in this instance she was a little, and but just a little, too late. The prize escaped her grasp. The noble country fell to the United States, and is now one of the brightest stars in the galaxy that illumines our flag and shield.

Several important acts were passed at the first session of the Twenty-ninth Congress; to wit:

An act reducing the duty on imports, and for other purposes; repealing the tariff act of 1842.

An act to establish a warehousing system. Still in force.

An act to provide for the better organization of the treasury, etc., commonly known as "the Sub-Treasury Act." Still in force.

An act to establish the Smithsonian Institution. Still in force.

Two very important bills were vetoed; namely, the River and Harbor Appropriation bill, and the bill to pay the claims for French spoliations prior to 1800.

The defeat of the former by the veto of the President produced great indignation at the North and West, especially in

New York, Ohio, and the Northwestern States. It was asserted by many Democrats that they had been induced to vote for the new tariff bill, contrary to their judgment and wishes, upon the understanding that by so doing they would prevent the veto of the River and Harbor bill; but, after having thus voted, they were cheated out of their favorite measure.

The French spoliation claims had been before Congress for forty years or more, and bills to pay these claims—as just as any ever provided for by Congress—had been passed at various times by the House and the Senate; but no bill for that purpose had ever before passed both branches at the same session, so as to be sent to the President for his approval.

Both these bills having undergone elaborate debate, it was to be presumed that members of the Senate and House knew what they were voting for, and had good reasons for their votes; yet the President vetoed the latter upon the allegation that they did not understand the subject and voted ignorantly!

Upon being congratulated at the end of the session upon having carried all the administration measures and defeated those to which he was opposed, Mr. Polk replied, "Yes; that has been done; but I am satisfied I am weaker for every one of them,—those that were carried as well as those that were vetoed." He judged rightly: in the midst of success, he had contrived to make enemies by his tortuous, insincere, and deceptive course. He deceived his friends; promised, but did not fulfill. Pledged to 54° 40′ publicly, and inducing his friends to believe he would stand firmly upon that line, he left them clandestinely, not having the moral courage to tell them he was about to break camp and retreat to "forty-nine," and leaving them in ignorance that he had deserted them.

Afraid to stand on "fifty-four forty," he dared not openly, and like a man conscious of faithfully serving the country, accept the proposition he had invited from the British government, of making "forty-nine" the boundary-line. He had by his tergiversations so entangled himself as to be helpless, and rather an object of pity. In this quandary, he asked the Senate, and especially the Whigs of that body, to *advise* him to do what he must but was afraid to do of his own accord.

Their patriotism proved to be superior to their desire to see one who had involved and entangled himself in the meshes of his own subterfuges writhing and struggling like a fly in a spider's web. In this dilemma, he dodged tremblingly behind even his opponents, frightened by the anathemas and scornful looks of his political associates in the Senate. He had not even the courage to stop the howling of his *organ* in Washington, which, as Mr. Benton has said, every morning made fierce attacks upon him for doing what the President had, the night before, besought him to accomplish; thereby giving the world and most of his party to understand that he was opposed to Mr. Benton's course and was still with the "fifty-four forties!" How could he expect to retain his friends? They dropped like leaves in autumn; and the succeeding fall elections went everywhere so adverse to the administration that the next (Thirtieth) Congress was decidedly Whig. But the weakest of all his acts was purchasing a peace of Santa Anna and placing him at the head of the Mexican nation, to become our most formidable and bitter enemy!

THE CAMPAIGN ON THE RIO GRANDE.

Whatever opinions the American people entertained in regard to the origin and justness or unjustness of the war, all took a deep and lively interest in the success of our arms, and rejoiced at the glorious and unlooked-for victories heralded by the dispatches from General Taylor, in command of "the army of occupation," so called, but of all arms amounting to only about twenty-five hundred.

His march for Brownsville was opposed at Palo Alto by a force of about six thousand. A severe battle ensued, May 8, 1846, and the Mexicans gave way before the obstinate valor of General Taylor's little army. But the victory cost us the lives of some gallant officers as well as brave men, the most distinguished of whom was Major Ringgold, of Ringgold's Battery.

Not satisfied with this attempt to arrest the march of General Taylor, and being reinforced, General La Vega made another stand the next day (9th) at Resaca de la Palma, three miles from Matamoras, where another and far severer battle was

fought, with desperate courage on both sides, but which resulted in the utter defeat of the Mexicans, with heavy loss in killed and wounded,—the battle being mostly a hand-to-hand conflict,—General La Vega and many officers and privates being taken prisoners, and eight pieces of artillery captured.

The news of these battles was received with great rejoicing by the people of the United States, especially as serious apprehensions had been felt for General Taylor's safety on account of the great disparity between his forces and those of the Mexicans. The public mind was not only relieved, but was thrown into a paroxysm of exultation over the achievements of our indomitable little army under "Old Rough and Ready."

The Mexicans immediately retreated across the Rio Grande; General Taylor occupied Matamoras and relieved Fort Brown.

The operations of our army in the valley of the Rio del Norte, during the summer and ensuing autumn, kept the public mind on the *qui vive*. General Taylor advanced his troops up the river, from point to point, aiming for the stronghold of Monterey, the key to Northern Mexico, which he invested on the 19th of September. The houses of Monterey were built mostly of stone, with parapets, so that each house was literally a castle; and upon and from these the Mexicans poured a galling fire upon our soldiers wherever they appeared in the narrow streets. This made it necessary that they should advance through the houses, breaking down the walls separating them from one another, and from inside of these picking off such Mexicans as could be seen on the other side of the street.

On the 24th, after a three days' sanguinary conflict, General Ampudia signified his desire for a personal interview with General Taylor, which was immediately granted, and resulted in a capitulation, placing the town and the material of war in General Taylor's possession.

"Upon occupying the city," says General Taylor, "it was discovered to be of great strength in itself, and to be very strongly fortified, manned with a force of twelve thousand troops, including three thousand irregulars. The force under my orders was four hundred and twenty-five officers and six thousand two hundred and twenty men."

The news of the capture of Monterey filled the hearts of the people with exultation, and "Old Rough and Ready" was at once spoken of as the man to take command of the nation as President.

Considering the disparity of numbers between the attacking and defending forces, and the extraordinary strength of the place, the taking of Monterey was one of the most brilliant feats of modern times.

With the desire to spare the effusion of blood, and the lives of women and children, General Taylor granted more favorable terms to General Ampudia than the President and Secretary of War chose to approve, and for this ostensible reason he had become, as he expressed it, a subject of Executive disapprobation. He, however, put the case plainly to the Secretary: "The apparent determination of the Department to place me in an attitude antagonistical to the government has an apt illustration in the well-known fable of Æsop. *I ask no favor, and shrink from no responsibility*, while intrusted with the command in this quarter."

It was not the terms of capitulation that the administration were concerned about; it was the fame and glory that emblazoned the name of Taylor, and his great popularity with the people, which gave them such anxiety. He had served his country too well; he was becoming formidable as a possible candidate for the Presidency. This was the trouble.

Soon after the capture of Monterey, the veteran troops of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey were taken from General Taylor and sent to Vera Cruz, where General Scott had been placed in command to pursue the only feasible route to the city of Mexico, as General Taylor always said, after first taking Vera Cruz. General Taylor was left with but four thousand and seventy-three men,—one-tenth regulars, artillery, and horse; not a single company (regular) of infantry, —to face and repel a Mexican army twenty thousand strong, which Santa Anna had sent to San Luis Potosi, and soon headed in person, well armed and equipped, ready to fall upon him in a sudden swoop and annihilate him and his handful of men.

SANTA ANNA! Yes; he whom Mr. Polk restored to Mexico, from which he was an exile at the opening of the war, had raised, organized, armed, and sent to San Luis Potosi, to annihilate General Taylor, a well-appointed army of twenty thousand men! It was he with whom the administration expected to enter into a treaty to close the war, and, for a consideration, cede territory to the United States! For this purpose permitted to enter Mexico, he was now the most implacable and formidable enemy we had!

"UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN."

By such means as have been shown, Mr. Polk had become President. Did the office bring him happiness? Undoubtedly he was one of the most unhappy men in the nation. His days were passed in weariness and anxiety, and his nights brought no rest. He had settled the Oregon question with England by giving up to her five degrees and forty minutes of territory to which the Baltimore Convention had declared our title was "clear and indisputable," which declaration he had echoed in his inaugural message; and for this he knew he had the bitterest curses of a large portion of his party. He had "*re*-annexed" Texas, by sending a small force down to the Rio Grande and taking possession of a country of which Mexico had always been in quiet possession up to that time. He had involved the nation in a war which he never designed, believing all the while that the Mexicans would immediately sue for peace, not daring to resist the United States,—"a war to get peace,"—a war to be closed by a treaty with Santa Anna, whom he sent from exile to Mexico to make peace, but who made the war ten times more fierce than it would have been had he remained in exile,—and last, but not least, a war that was making military reputations for Whig generals!

The people and the press would pertinaciously inquire, How came Santa Anna at the head of the Mexican armies, when at the commencement of the war he was an exile at Havana, and had never been recalled? How did he pass through our line of blockade and enter Vera Cruz?

But more: Mr. Polk was a *politician*, and knew the signifi-

cance of State elections as indices of the feelings of the people towards the administration. These were taking place, and everywhere the administration was suffering defeat.

Those who saw the President noticed his care-worn, anxious, haggard look. Happily for him, his wife was a woman of rare excellence, discretion, and resolution; a wise and affectionate counselor, cheerful and agreeable, with the happy art of infusing her cheerfulness into those around her. She was the light of the White House, which but for her would have been gloomy enough.

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-NINTH CONGRESS.

The President saluted Congress, on its annual assembling on the first Monday of December, 1846, with an unusually long message, a large portion of which was devoted to the origin and causes, as explained by him, of the Mexican War; as if intended as an apology to the American people, who did not understand the subject and had wrongly condemned the Executive; or as if he was desirous to justify his course to other nations and to posterity.

Mr. Benton has informed us, from personal knowledge, that it had been determined, before the meeting of Congress, that there should be a pause in the war; that, instead of pushing it forward with vigor, the plan of "a masterly inactivity" had been determined on, and was to be recommended to Congress; that such was the purport of the message already prepared. He states that on arriving at Washington, a few days before the meeting of Congress, he was requested to look over the message, as prepared, and make remarks upon it; that he did so, and objected to this "masterly inactivity" policy, a favorite one with, and recommended by, Mr. Calhoun. His arguments, he says, convinced the President, who adopted the opposite policy recommended by him, against the opinion and advice of his cabinet.

The President deemed it necessary to give in his message a long and apologetic account of the entrance of Santa Anna, by permission of the administration, into Mexico; virtually admitting that he had been overreached and outwitted by the wily

and treacherous chief through whose influence he had expected to secure a treaty of peace! The reading of this portion of the message provoked not only smiles, but many derisive jokes. One of the President's political friends remarked that while he (the President) was freely charging others with giving "aid and comfort to the enemy," he thought the President himself had given the Mexicans more aid than all others, by sending them the ablest general they could have possibly obtained.

The feeling and temper of the two parties in Congress were by no means tolerant and conciliatory. The President, in his message, had said, "The war has been represented as unjust and unnecessary, and one of aggression on our part upon a weak and injured enemy. A more effective means could not have been devised to encourage the enemy and protract the war than to advocate and adhere to their course, and thus give them 'aid and comfort.'"

This was an ill-tempered thrust at those who condemned the administration for unnecessarily involving the country in a war. This was irritating enough; but the "Union," the acknowledged organ of the President, constantly denounced all who criticised the acts of the government as "guilty of moral treason."

Mr. Garrett Davis—now (1872) a Senator in Congress, and one of the very few survivors of the Twenty-ninth Congress*—submitted a resolution calling upon the President to inform that body whether the extraordinary course pursued by General Kearney, Commodore Sloat, and Captain Stockton, in establishing civil governments in California and New Mexico, declaring them to be a part of the United States, and requiring the inhabitants to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, had been pursued by order of the President, and if not, whether it met his sanction.

This occasioned a keen debate of two or three days' duration. Mr. Davis arraigned the administration for violating the laws of nations and exercising powers not conferred by the Constitution and laws of the United States. He wished to know by what authority under our Constitution, or the laws of nations, these public officers had undertaken to establish civil govern

* Died shortly after this was written.

ments in foreign and conquered territories, and to style themselves "*Governors and Commanders-in-chief*," and whether these proceedings were sanctioned by the President.

It mattered not what subject came up for debate, the discussion was the same,—attack and defense. The question was frequently asked by the Whigs, "What is the object of this war? What is it to accomplish? When and how is it to end? The President had said it was not waged for conquest: why, then, were our armies penetrating Mexico? Two of her provinces had already been conquered and civil governments established." It was replied that our armies were sent to Mexico "to conquer a peace." But how far were they to go before peace could be conquered? Was Santa Anna sent there to help us conquer a peace?

The Whigs, however, did not fail to vote for all the supplies of men and money called for to carry on the war, though it was alleged by them to be a notable fact that all the quartermasters, surgeons, assistant surgeons, sutlers, contractors,—all the non-combatants and money-making corps,—were of the opposite politics. Every general of volunteers, without an exception, appointed by the President was a Democrat.

In a debate which occurred in the House on the 23d of December, between Mr. Davis, of Kentucky, and Mr. Bailey, of Virginia, the latter took occasion to refer to some remarks of the former, and presented him in the attitude of a "moral traitor," for having, by what he had said, given "aid and comfort" to the enemy.

THE LIE, AND A CHALLENGE GIVEN.

Mr. Davis rose to deny or explain, but Mr. Bailey refused to yield the floor for that purpose, saying that he would hear explanations *out of the House*. Mr. Bailey proceeded, but Mr. Davis said he would not be misrepresented. Mr. Bailey replied that he would not be interrupted. Mr. Davis rejoined that if Mr. Bailey represented him as he had done, he represented him falsely. Mr. Bailey retorted the lie, which of course closed the controversy *in the House*.

Mr. Davis immediately addressed a written invitation to

Mr. Bailey to meet him in Baltimore, for the purpose of settling the matter in controversy between them; the meaning of which was well understood. Mr. Davis, accompanied by two or three friends, among whom was Senator Barrow, left Washington by the first train for the former city, to avoid arrest.

Mr. Bailey, however, did not apprehend an arrest, and did not, therefore, leave Washington. But the conservators of the peace were vigilant, and he was arrested and put under bonds not to leave the city to engage in a duel.

Meantime, Mr. Davis and his friends were waiting at Barnum's Hotel to hear from Mr. Bailey. But while there, General Barrow, in the full gush of health,—a stout, well-formed man, who had never known an hour's sickness in his life,—was taken suddenly ill, even while standing erect thanking God for this remarkable health, and remarking to those around him that he scarcely knew the sensation of pain, and prostrated with severe suffering. A physician and surgeon were called, and finally Dr. McClellan, of Philadelphia, was sent for, and arrived; but no relief could be given, and death ensued after two days of intense pain. General Barrow was sensible of his danger, and assured his friends that he could not recover. He met death with the calmness and composure of a Christian, a philosopher, and a hero,—conscious to the last minute.

This sudden death of one who was universally esteemed and beloved cast a deep gloom upon the Senate, and, indeed, upon the House and community. Without his death being formally announced, such were the mournful feelings of Senators that on meeting they immediately adjourned. No individual in Congress had won a larger share of kindly feeling and esteem from his associates. He had a manly bearing, a lofty independence and fearlessness, united with a vein of pleasantry and humor, and a most noble nature, which won all hearts. A clearer head, a kinder heart, an honor more unsullied, an integrity more unquestionable, a disposition more equable and companionable, are rarely united in the same individual.

His death was formally announced in the Senate the next day.

Mr. Johnson, of Louisiana, the colleague of the deceased, performed this sad duty in a feeling manner. He was followed by

Mr. Benton, who paid a just tribute to the generous and estimable qualities of him whose sudden exit had cast a deep gloom over all. Other Democratic Senators also paid eloquent and feeling tributes to the departed.

Mr. Crittenden rose, his eyes suffused with tears which would not cease to flow, and several times essayed to speak, but was overcome by deep emotion. Unable to utter a word, he sank into his seat and indulged in "the luxury of grief." No words could have equaled the eloquence of this silence, which touched every heart and drew tears from every eye in the chamber.

As Mr. Crittenden sat down, overcome with grief, Mr. Hannegan rose, impelled by the ardor of his feelings, and for ten or fifteen minutes poured forth those feelings in gushing eloquence, which, as they came from the heart, reached the heart of every Senator present. They were the tribute of friendship, admiration, love, and sorrow from a political opponent, but none the less sincere and noble.

Mr. Mangum simply offered the usual resolutions.

There was no counterfeiting in this scene; no labored expressions of grief which came from the head and not the heart. Sadness sat upon the countenances of all present.

The funeral of Mr. Barrow took place next day, attended by the President and his cabinet, the Judges of the Supreme Court, foreign ministers, and both branches of Congress.

Mr. Davis returned from Baltimore; friends interposed, and proposed terms of settlement, which were accepted by both parties; and thus the affair was disposed of.

THE THREE-MILLION BILL.

It will be recollected that at the first session of the Twenty-ninth Congress the President applied for an appropriation of two millions of dollars to enable him to negotiate a treaty of peace with Mexico and to obtain territory of her, which passed the House with the "Wilmot Proviso" amendment; but the bill was prevented from being brought up in the Senate by Mr. Davis, of Massachusetts, speaking till the hour of adjournment. The President now renewed the application, but asked for three millions instead of two. The subject came up in both branches

of Congress, and upon this measure the whole subject of the war underwent a thorough, prolonged, and earnest discussion on the part of the opposition, though such as favored the proposition and sustained the administration meant to "give their thoughts no tongue."

In the House, as usual, the speakers exhibited more ardor in the debate and freedom of remark than in the Senate, where senatorial propriety placed a judicious curb upon the members.

The anticipation of obtaining more southern territory brought the slavery question prominently forward. Texas, under Mexico, was free territory; it was now a slave State. This fact had tended greatly to increase the anti-slavery feeling at the North and West, and these sections were now resolutely determined that not a foot more of slave territory should be added to the Union: and this resolution was adhered to in the creating of California and New Mexico as Territories. The acquisition of Texas, California, and New Mexico greatly increased and embittered the slavery contest.

A BEAUTIFUL INCIDENT.

The venerable J. Q. Adams had been stricken down, at his home in Quincy, Massachusetts, by paralysis, before the meeting of Congress, on account of which he was unable to appear and take his seat until the 13th day of February. On that day, while Mr. Hunt, of New York, was addressing the committee of the whole on the Three-Million bill, in support of the Wilmot Proviso, which had been moved as an amendment to it, the venerable figure of the ex-President presented itself at the centre door of the hall, and at once attracted all eyes. Mr. Hunt suspended his speech; Mr. Mosely, of New York, and Mr. Holmes, of South Carolina, advanced to Mr. Adams, and, each taking him by an arm, conducted him to the seat he had for many years occupied, and which had been taken at the opening of the session by Mr. Andrew Johnson, who declared at the time that he took it to surrender it to Mr. Adams if they should again have the pleasure of his presence in that hall. Mr. Johnson now gracefully surrendered it; members gathered around the venerable man, with congratulations on his return;

and after two or three minutes' pause, much affected by the tender cordiality of his reception by the House, he rose, and, in a feeble voice, briefly tendered his heartfelt thanks. Mr. Hunt then resumed his remarks.

This little incident showed that though members of Congress, in the conflicts of opinion and party interests, may seem to be devoid of those emotions of the heart and sympathies with others which so ennoble human nature, yet, down, down beneath the surface agitated by the storms of politics, these emotions and sympathies remain undisturbed, only requiring proper occasions to call them into action.

THE PUBLIC PRINTER EXCLUDED FROM THE SENATE.

The editor of the "Union," the organ of the administration, Mr. Ritchie, had for some time been very free in his remarks upon those who did not think proper to support all the measures of the administration and who advocated the Wilmot Proviso, censuring them in very reprehensible terms, scolding at Senators and members as if they were school-boys subject to his ferule.

On the 9th of February appeared a communication in that paper couched in very offensive and insulting language. To this attention was called by the editor by saying, "A correspondent in this evening's 'Union' has painted, with strong and indignant feelings, the rejection of the army bill in the Senate of the United States," etc. The correspondent said, "The floor of Congress is another section of the field of conflict. There the cause of Mexico is maintained with zeal and ability.

* * * * * * * *

"In the Senate of the United States, on yesterday, the Mexicans achieved another victory. . . . If Santa Anna, Ampudia, or any other Mexican general could snatch from our soldiers a corresponding victory, we should place them upon the same elevation where their compatriots, friends, and fellow-soldiers in the Senate now stand."

This did not fail to attract the notice it was intended it should. But what followed was not, probably, anticipated.

The day after the publication of this grossly-insulting article, Mr. Yulee, of Florida, Democrat, introduced resolutions in the Senate referring to the communication in the "Union," and the approving notice of it by the editor, who, as public printer, had, by the courtesy of the Senate, the privilege of the floor, and withdrawing that privilege,—directing the doorkeeper not to permit him to enter.

After a very sharp debate, the resolutions were adopted, followed on the part of the "Union" by showers of opprobrious epithets hurled at the Senate, that "privileged body," "acting in the dark," "combining, in their own body, accusers, judges, jurors, and executors in cases where they are also parties"!

Mr. Ritchie was in "a crisis," as he always appeared to be; alarmed at the extraordinary assumption of power by the Senate, and the danger to "the liberty of the press"!

Mr. Westcott, of Florida, sustained his colleague's resolutions. In the course of his speech, he said there was one subject in which he cordially agreed with the Senator from South Carolina. It was in the reprobation of that system of politics of which the primary principle is the mere possession of power and office,—of that party organization which looks to office of every character as the rightful spoils of victory. The fearful degeneracy of parties in this respect, and the corrupting practices of giving rewards by contracts, jobs, and various employments to partisans and favorites which had prevailed for some years past, were truly alarming.

Speaking of his being, and having always been, a Democrat, and that an attempt might be made to read him out of the party for his course here, he said, Very well, let it be tried; he was ready for the trial. And, going on while Mr. Webster, who sat in front of and next to him, was looking at and intently listening to him, he said, if the attempt should succeed, he should be placed in the category in which his honorable friend from Massachusetts was some years ago, when he exclaimed, "Where shall I go?" This created a general laugh at Mr. Webster's expense, who, taken by surprise, blushed, turned upon his seat, and finally joined in the laugh with others.

DEBATE ON THE THREE-MILLION BILL.

Mr. Corwin,—"Tom Corwin,"—of Ohio, took part in the debate on the Three-Million bill, and made a speech peculiarly Corwinian,—the most provocative of laughter of any ever listened to in the Senate. It being known that he was to address the Senate, long before the hour of meeting the galleries were packed, not an inch of room being vacant; the ladies, as usual, outnumbering the gentlemen, and finally, by permission of the Senate, rushing into the chamber and filling it to its utmost capacity. Mr. Corwin, in his peculiar line, was certainly the most effective and attractive speaker it was ever my good fortune to hear. He was wholly unlike any other, and certainly inimitable. I have given an account of his speech in reply to General Crary, in 1840, the most notable of its character ever heard in the House. His speech in the Senate on the Three-Million bill was equally notable, and brought into action in a much greater degree his extraordinary powers of description, pathos, irony, and sarcasm. It was reported and printed in the "National Intelligencer" of February 23, 1847,—that is to say, the *words* of the speech, but as unlike the speech as it came from his lips, with his emphasis, expression, mobility of face, and glance of eye, as the remainder of a bottle of champagne after standing a week is unlike the sparkling beverage when first uncorked.

Speaking of the allegation of the President, that the Mexicans had invaded our country, and that "American blood had been spilt upon American soil," Mr. Corwin said,—

"General Taylor was ordered to march down to the Rio Grande. Obeying orders, he did so; and what did he find in the country lying between the Nueces and that river? What did he write home? Do you hear of 'trial by jury' there? or Anglo-Saxons making cotton with negroes? No! You hear of Mexicans there, but fleeing from their fields at the approach of your army: no slaves. If there were a Texas population on the right bank, why did they not hail with joy the advancement of his army coming to protect them from the ravages of the Mexicans?"

Mr. Corwin continued: "The Senator from Michigan [Mr. Cass] says we want California, and must have it. Why, my *Christian* brother, on what principle? 'We want room,' is the reply. Sir, look at this pretense of the want of *room;* with twenty millions of people, you have one thousand millions of acres of unappropriated land, upon which any one who wants a farm can 'squat,' and secure a good one for one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. But the Senator from Michigan says our population will in a few years be two hundred millions, and we want *room* for them, therefore we must have California. If I were a Mexican I would ask, 'Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead? If you come to mine, we will greet you with bloody hands and welcome you to hospitable graves.'

"You want 'more *room*'! This has been the plea of every robber from Nimrod to the present day. I dare say when Tamerlane descended from a throne built of seventy thousand skulls, and led his blood-thirsty legions to further slaughter, he wanted 'more *room.*' Bajazet was another of those fellows who wanted 'more *room;*' and Mister Alexander, the Macedonian madman, of kindred tastes with the Anglo-Saxon, went to India with his army in search of 'more *room,*' and fought a bloody battle on the very ground where recently England and the Sikhs engaged in another, the contest being also, as formerly, for 'more *room.*'"

The declaration of Mr. Corwin, that if he were a MEXICAN he would greet us with bloody hands and welcome us to hospitable graves, brought down the whole Democratic press in a chorus of indignant denunciations, charging him with treason, being an enemy to his country, etc. But was there anything unpatriotic in this sentiment? He was condemning our seizing Mexican territory unjustifiably. Suppose any foreign nation had seized, in like manner, a portion of our territory, would not Americans greet their invaders with bloody hands and welcome them to hospitable graves? And would it not be patriotic in them to do so? Why, then, not patriotic in Mexicans? And if patriotic in them, why not in Mr. Corwin, *if he were a Mexican?* Many a Northern-born man,

settled at the South, greeted the Union soldiers with bloody hands and welcomed them to hospitable graves during the Rebellion, as we did Southern soldiers who invaded Pennsylvania, particularly at Gettysburg.

"TOM CORWIN."

The name of no distinguished American is more familiar to the American ear than that of "Tom Corwin:" not *Thomas* Corwin, or Governor Corwin, or Senator Corwin, but plain, familiar "Tom Corwin."

And why was Tom Corwin so universally known, admired, and loved? Because he was a man of extraordinary powers. Endowed by nature with a deep substratum of solid common sense and sound judgment, with an intuitive perception of the inner workings of men's hearts and ruling passions, he had a wonderfully quick perception of whatever was comic, absurd, or ludicrous. His mind, like a mirror, received these impressions, and reflected them to others through his thoughts and words, which became humor, wit, or sarcasm, according to circumstances,—sometimes of the most refined and delicate character, more often of a coarser grain. It seemed as impossible for him to prevent his mind giving off in flashes the images thus cast upon it, as for the mirror upon which falls the sun's rays from flashing them off with blinding brilliance. Hence it appeared as if he delighted and sought opportunities to indulge in witty or scorching remarks to bring forth the guffaws of a multitude or excite the genial mirth of a select social circle. And he thus became more noted for his wit and happy repartees than for the more solid mental powers which he largely possessed.

Gratifying as it was to him to set a crowd wild with laughter, or to create merriment among a few friends, or throw so dignified a body as the Senate of the United States into a fit of laughter, it was mortifying to him to bear the character of a wit, a joker, a teller of good stories, rather than that of a statesman and a jurist.

His complexion was quite dark, resembling that of a Portuguese or a West Indian; and he often related amusing anec-

dotes of his being taken for a "cullud pusson" by both whites and blacks, and by the former refused entrance into cars, steamers, or public places, where colored people were not allowed to go under the old state of things.

Mr. Simmons, of Rhode Island, took the ground that the war might have been avoided, and referred to the President's message of December 2, 1845, to show that he then considered the Valley of the Nueces as the frontier of Mexico. In his message he said he had stationed the army on the *frontier* of Mexico. Where were they stationed? Why, at Corpus Christi,—"on the frontier of Mexico."

It was most extraordinary, he thought, that a nation should insist on indemnity for the expenses of the war she herself had made, and yet be willing to pay the nation she claimed indemnity from the sum of three millions to make peace with her! He did not like the idea of buying Mexico; there was something degrading in it to us. Neither did he wish to degrade Mexico by buying her up, or despoiling her of her territory. We should be just to her, and even liberal. We ought to say candidly and frankly that we did not intend despoiling her. Such a declaration would place us right before the world, and go far towards inducing her to do right. He feared that impartial men in all parts of the world would look at our statement and at hers, and decide against us in this contest. He feared that the aspirations of all good men, when they knelt at the altar, would go up to the God of justice in behalf of the weak and helpless nation upon which we had made war! The small calculation which counted out acres at a dollar and a quarter was unworthy of a great nation. A hundred millions, nay, untold hundreds of millions, were not to be weighed in the balance against national honor and character, against the opinion of the world: an untarnished national honor, a lofty national character, the good opinion of mankind, were not to be estimated by dollars: they were inappreciable; and such he desired his country to possess and cherish.

JAMES F. SIMMONS.

The Senator from Rhode Island, of whose manly, elevated, and patriotic speech I have just given a brief account, was, to use a common expression, "a self-made" statesman; that is to say, he was neither born nor nurtured in the lap of luxury, nor educated in any collegiate or academic institution. He belonged to that class of public men who are the peculiar product of our liberal institutions, which open the road for intellect, merit, and energy to the highest positions in the government.

Indebted to the beneficent Creator for strong mental powers, engaged from time to time in different branches of industry,—a farmer, machinist, merchant, manufacturer, banker, State legislator, United States Senator,—he had had great experience in business affairs, and had accumulated a fund of information relative thereto. He was without a rival in all that regards the industrial condition and resources of our country,—information invaluable to him in legislating for the public interests. Frequently brought in contact, in debate, with Mr. Calhoun, Mr. McDuffie, and other Southern Senators, their elaborate and fine-spun theories were before his battery of facts as mere cob-houses, and were scattered like thistle-down by the wind. These Southern *doctrinaire* gentlemen found him the most "troublesome customer" and dangerous antagonist they met in the Senate, as his powers of discrimination could at once detect any fallacy in their reasoning, and his own clear head and practical knowledge enabled him to expose their errors and sophistical arguments.

He had a remarkable memory for facts, which were not with him mere dry, worthless chips, but matters of significance, from which principles and future results were to be educed, and the future judged of,—finger-boards to point the way to statesmen, but which many in public life have not the power or the wish to read.

Though not an easy or fluent speaker, but, on the contrary, often embarrassed and hesitating, through his great modesty and diffidence, with a rather rustic manner while speaking, few had his power of chaining the attention of Senators, or of

enlightening them to the same extent upon subjects of finance, the tariff, manufactures, and business affairs generally. With all his hesitancy and ungainliness of manner, he sometimes became extremely eloquent, as he did on the occasion I have just mentioned, and more especially on a former occasion, when depicting the effect of some unwise action of Congress in regard to the tariff, which depopulated whole villages in Rhode Island of their industrious population,—dozens of families, grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, starting together for the West; reluctantly and mournfully leaving their heretofore happy hearths and homes, where they could no longer find employment; driven away by the action of an unwise government, as were a large portion of the industrious and skilled population of France by that most unwise act of a bigoted king, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Such was the pathos of Mr. Simmons's description of the exodus from Rhode Island of skilled laborers, witnessed personally by himself, that an involuntary tear stood in the eyes of many Senators, even Mr. Calhoun himself being deeply moved. He was one of the few men whom Mr. Clay consulted in regard to public affairs, especially questions relating to finance, revenue, the tariff, etc., and for whom I know he entertained a high regard. Of a social, genial disposition, few were more sincerely esteemed for their high qualities of both head and heart.

MR. CALHOUN'S SLAVERY RESOLUTIONS.—HE DENIES THE RIGHT OF CONGRESS TO PROHIBIT SLAVERY IN A TERRITORY.—A "NEW DEPARTURE."

On the 19th of February, Mr. Calhoun submitted to the Senate a series of resolutions,—four in number,—which must be taken as a new manifesto of the South, and their ultimatum to the North,—this, or disunion.

The first declared that the Territories of the United States belong to the several *States*, and are their joint property.

The second, that Congress has no right to do any act that shall make any discrimination between the States of this Union in regard to their interests in any territory acquired or to be acquired.

The third, that the enactment of any law which should directly or indirectly deprive the citizens of any State from emigrating *with their property* into any Territory will make such discrimination, and would therefore be a violation of the Constitution and the rights of the States.

The fourth, that no other restriction can be imposed upon a Territory or the people thereof, as a condition of admission into the Union as a State, than that its Constitution shall be republican.

I have not given the exact words, but the above is the purport of these resolutions. Mr. Benton immediately pronounced them "fire-brands."

Mr. Calhoun accompanied his resolutions by a well-prepared speech, which was intended to be a trumpet-call to the South to rally as a unit to the support of slavery, and resist any attempt to put a stop to its extension into free territory to be acquired, as California and New Mexico were free territory. He endeavored to touch the pride of Southern men by representing that if they were denied the right to take their slaves with them into any such territory, it would be treating them as inferiors. "It was a great, a solemn question for their constituents to decide. He would give no advice; but, for one, he would rather meet any extremity than give up one inch of what belonged to them as members of this great republic. What! acknowledged inferiority! The surrender of life is nothing to sinking down into acknowledged inferiority!"

These resolutions thus thrown into the seething cauldron of debate did not go unnoticed. The latter part of the speech of Mr. Simmons, on the Three-Million bill, which I have briefly noticed, was an earnest and forcible reply to the charge made by Mr. Calhoun that the non-slaveholding States were pursuing an aggressive policy towards the slaveholding States. Mr. Simmons expressed his surprise that the Senator from South Carolina should have asserted that Congress has not a right to exclude slavery from their own Territories. He stated a significant fact which he thought important; namely, that when the Constitution was formed and adopted, the United States held no territory into which a slaveholder had a right to go and hold

his slaves. The framers of the Constitution did not then deem it unjust to the South, nor unconstitutional, to exclude slaves from the Territories belonging to the United States. To this he called particular attention, and asked if it were not a fact.

Mr. Webster.—"Certainly."

Mr. Simmons desired to know of Mr. Calhoun if we had not as much right to take cognizance of the subject of slavery in our own Territories—to take means to prevent it—as we had to adopt a course of policy as a nation to prevent the abolition of slavery in a foreign state. He alluded to the exceptions taken by Mr. Calhoun to Lord Aberdeen's letter, and the steps which he, as part of the administration of Mr. Tyler, took to bring about the annexation of Texas, in order to prevent the abolition of slavery there. The Senator from South Carolina was completely cornered.

Mr. Calhoun, unfortunately for himself, lacked consistency: ever assuming new positions and proclaiming new dogmas to fit new occasions, he sometimes found himself directly in conflict with himself, as Mr. Simmons showed him to be on this occasion.

The resolutions were at once sent to all the slave States, and adopted by most of them, virtually so by the whole; "and then commenced," says Mr. Benton, "the great slavery agitation, founded upon the dogma of '*no power in Congress to legislate upon slavery in the Territories*,' which has led to the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise line,—which filled the Union with distraction,—and which is threatening to bring all Federal legislation and all Federal elections to a mere sectional struggle, in which one half of the States is to be arrayed against the other." This was Mr. Benton's utterance in 1856. He did not live to see the final issue of this "struggle," a bloody conflict and the abolition of slavery.

Mr. Benton replied to Mr. Calhoun in a spirit, tone, and manner which accorded with his denunciations of the resolutions as "fire-brands."

Mr. Webster addressed the Senate on the Three-Million bill, and spoke with more than usual impressiveness. "In the present posture of affairs and of parties," said Mr. Webster, "we

may well look back upon the past. Within a year or two after Texas had achieved its independence, there were those who already spoke of its annexation to the United States. Against that project I felt it to be my duty to take an early and decided course. The prudence of Mr. Van Buren stifled the project for a time; but in the latter part of Mr. Tyler's administration it was revived. Sir, the transactions and occurrences from that time onward till the measure was finally consummated, in December, 1845, are matters of history and record. That history and that record can neither be falsified nor erased. . . .

"The party in the North which calls itself, by way of distinction and eminence, the 'Liberty party,' opposed with all its force the election of the Whig candidate in 1844, when it had the power of assisting and securing the election of that candidate and of preventing Mr. Polk's election, and when it was as clear and visible as the sun at noonday that Mr. Polk's election would bring slaveholding Texas into the Union. No man can deny this.

"Sir, I fear we are not yet arrived at the beginning of the end. I pretend to see but little of the future, and that little gives no gratification. All I can see is contention, strife, and agitation. . . . Sir, the future is full of difficulties and full of dangers."

Mr. Webster's fears of the then future were no illusions. All he could see in that future was contention, strife, and agitation. They came; but he did not live to witness or take part in that strife, that bloody strife, into which the country was even then fast drifting.

Mr. Evans, Mr. Badger, General Cass, and other Senators took part in the discussion of the bill, which was finally passed without the Wilmot Proviso. It then went back to the House, where it was finally passed without the Proviso.

SENATORS WHO NOW LEFT THE SENATE.

Among the Senators who now left Congress, never again to return, were Messrs. Archer, of Virginia; Thomas Clayton, of Delaware; Chester Ashley, of Arkansas; Lewis Cass and Wm. Woodbridge, of Michigan; George Evans, of Maine; James S.

Morehead, of Kentucky; and Jesse B. Speight, of North Carolina. The term of Mr. James F. Simmons, of Rhode Island, also expired, but he was elected again United States Senator, and entered the Thirty-Fifth Congress, after ten years' absence.

Of Mr. Evans and Mr. Simmons it was then said, "Possessing minds of the first order, enlarged views, and clear understandings,—practical and industrious,—their absence from the Senate will be seriously felt. Both are particularly able and well informed in all matters relating to finance, commerce, trade, and manufactures,—subjects which so few, so *very* few, public men comprehend. Their places cannot be filled by their respective States; nor, indeed, by any other State or States. The absence of such men from the Senate is a national loss."

There was a general feeling of regret in commercial and manufacturing circles that services so honorable to the ex-Senators and so beneficial to the country should be brought to a close.

Mr. Wm. S. Archer, of Virginia, was a high-toned gentleman bred and born, one of the true chivalry of the South and of the "F. F. V.'s;" much esteemed by Senators, and especially by Mr. Clay. He associated freely, however, with but few, holding himself aloof—as Randolph did—from all save those who were in some way distinguished. Coarseness of manners, the absence of refinement, and inattention to or non-observance of those courtesies of life which are its ornament, were to him abominations to be avoided. He endeavored to be refined and choice in his language, and in this endeavor habitually used what some very expressively style "dictionary words," a habit which made him appear pedantic and was the source of much amusement to his friends. His ideas did not flow smoothly, clothed as they were in "words of awful length and thundering sound;" and it was sometimes no easy matter to comprehend his meaning. The following anecdote gives a better idea and illustration of the man in this respect than any description possibly could.

"What sort of a fellow is this new Virginia Senator?" asked Mr. Webster of Colonel Preston, of South Carolina, after dining in company with Mr. Archer. "Do you know him?"

"Yes," replied Colonel Preston, "very well; and a very clever fellow he is. What do *you* think of him?"

"Why," said Mr. Webster, "I dined with him to-day, and think him a preposterous aggregation of heterogeneous paradoxes and perdurable peremptorences."

A description so graphic in imitation of Mr. Archer's own peculiar use of words, that Colonel Preston laughed till he could hardly stand.

In his social intercourse Mr. Archer had the nicest sense of propriety, and a just appreciation of what was due to others as well as to himself. Every law and usage of etiquette was scrupulously observed, and thus his social accounts were kept well balanced.

It seemed as if a considerable portion of the best men in the Senate were now leaving it, never to return. As I have mentioned, Mr. Thomas Clayton was one of those who now took a final leave of that body. He was one of the few Senators who were rarely heard in debate; but, though remarkably taciturn, he exercised great influence on members. Urbane in his intercourse with his brother Senators, his opinions were very decidedly expressed and firmly maintained; immovable as Mont Blanc, no consideration of policy, no hope of gaining any temporary political advantage, could induce him to swerve the thousandth part of a hair from the path of rectitude, or yield for an instant a fixed principle. To find himself alone in his vote was the same to him as if the whole Senate voted with him. No ambition affected, no interest could tempt him. As he never spoke, the public knew little of him; but he might well be called, as he was, the Aristides of the Senate. He was one of the three Senators who would not proclaim a lie to the world by voting for the preamble declaring that *war existed by the act of Mexico*, though they might be denounced as unpatriotic for refusing to vote for supplies for the army. Such denunciations had no terrors for him.

In Governor Woodbridge, another of the outgoing Senators, were eminently combined the wisdom of the sage, the experience of age, the simplicity of a child, and the affection of a woman. His mild and attractive countenance and pleasant

voice at once gave assurance of a benevolent heart and a kindly disposition. Purity and probity beamed in his countenance and inspired respect, which, in those who had much social intercourse with him, soon ripened into warmer feelings. With all these lovable qualities, united with a calm, modest demeanor, he combined a solid judgment, clear views, and tenacity of purpose. To know Governor Woodbridge was to love him: he was so kind, so mild-spoken, so *fatherly*, so entertaining in his conversation, having had a varied experience of Western life,—of life on the borders of civilization,—which furnished him with stores of rich anecdotes, that one never wearied of listening to his pleasant voice. It was with deep regret that those with whom he had so long associated in the Senate now took final leave of him; even his political opponents felt sad at parting with one so gentle, so free from all asperity,—one whom they no less respected than loved. Who could see such men leave the councils of the nation without a feeling of sadness?

James S. Morehead, of Kentucky. Having belonged to the same mess during the long session of 1844,—the mess consisting of Judge Mangum, then President of the Senate, Governor Morehead, James F. Simmons, Spencer Jarnigan, and myself, all Senators but one,—I cannot permit one for whom I entertain so high an esteem to pass away wholly unnoticed. Governor Morehead won friends among all with whom he associated; while his efforts in the Senate on the questions of the bank, the protective tariff, Oregon, the Compromise of 1850, the French Spoliation bill, the veto power, the annexation of Texas, and his elaborate and very able report on the Presidential power of removal from office,—"civil service,"—established his reputation for high abilities, unwearied industry, and sound judgment. The Senatorial colleague first of Mr. Clay, and then of Mr. Crittenden, young as he was in years and Senatorial life, he stood by their side no unworthy associate of men of such eminence and fame. The devoted friend of both, he modestly looked up to them for counsel and advice, relying, however, upon his own abilities to win for himself the character of a valuable public servant. Both held him in high esteem as a man, and

as a co-representative of their gallant State; and their manner towards him was more than friendly,—it was affectionate.

BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.

A large portion of General Taylor's troops having been withdrawn from him after the capture of Monterey, including all the regulars in his army, in order to form an army of invasion under General Scott, to enter Mexico at Vera Cruz, much anxiety was felt in regard to the safety of General Taylor and his little army of volunteers, especially after it was known that he had advanced to and taken Saltillo, and pushed forward to Agua Nueva, in advance of Buena Vista, and that Santa Anna was advancing against him at the head of an army of twenty thousand well-appointed veteran troops.

As time wore on, this anxiety became intense, especially among the friends and relatives of the volunteers, who were nearly all from the Western and Southwestern States. At length rumors of a great battle came floating on the breeze, which tended to increase the anxiety, as no definite result was reported. Soon, however, the public mind was relieved by the arrival of a courier (young Crittenden) sent by General Taylor to Washington with the cheering report of a great victory. Though the victory had been won at the cost of an unusually large number of killed and wounded, including among the former many gallant officers of high esteem and influence at home, whose loss the country could not but deplore, the victory itself, dearly purchased as it was, spread universal joy over the land.

The battle—of two days' duration, fought on the 22d and 23d of February, desperately contested, prolific of chivalric incidents and gallant exploits—was a proud one for the nation, and crowned the general and his brave little army with honor and glory. Among those best known and most esteemed whose lives purchased the glorious victory at Buena Vista were Colonels Clay (Henry, Jr.), Hardin, and McKee, and Lieutenant Lincoln, son of Governor Levi Lincoln, of Massachusetts. Colonel Jefferson Davis, who commanded a regiment of Mississippi volunteers, and fought gallantly, was among

the wounded. Had he been among the slain, he would have died the death of a patriot, instead of filling, as he now will, the grave of a rebel. The country was wild with delight, and proud of the unyielding bravery of its volunteers. They had for two days resisted, and finally repelled, the charges of four times their numbers of veteran troops, under the ablest Mexican general, Santa Anna himself, whose hasty retreat, bag and baggage, on the night of the second day, leaving his dead and wounded, in number nearly equal to our army, to the care of those he came to conquer and whose surrender he demanded, was an acknowledgment of defeat.

General Taylor had been ordered by the government to fall back upon Monterey; but, knowing that Buena Vista was his true Thermopylæ,—the strongest position on the line of the enemy's advance,—he refused to abandon it for a less tenable one, and wisely determined to check Santa Anna's advance at that point. The result justified his decision, and proved his skill as a general.

No important events occurred on this frontier after this battle, the seat of war now being on the line from Vera Cruz to Mexico, and around the latter city.

GENERAL SCOTT'S CAREER IN MEXICO.

Having secured himself, as he supposed, against "a fire in the rear," General Scott was, at his own request, placed in command of an army which was to be landed at Vera Cruz and marched to the city of Mexico. To create this army a large portion of the troops under General Taylor were withdrawn from him, including all the regulars, and transported to Vera Cruz, to join other troops raised for the invasion of Mexico.

The landing of the army was gallantly accomplished, and the city immediately invested, and in a short time taken. General Scott then commenced his march, and was met by the Mexican army, intrenched at Cerro Gordo. A severe battle ensued, a glorious victory was won by the American troops, and the line of march again resumed towards "the halls of the Montezumas," between which and "the army of invasion" stood Contreras,

Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec, each made memorable by victories which crowned our arms, and won for the commanding general the admiration not only of his countrymen, but of all Europe, and the reputation of being the most consummate commander of the age. Not a single repulse checked his brilliant career: like Marlborough, all his battles were victories, followed by an advance, until "the city of the Montezumas," if not "the halls," was entered by the conqueror, who from thence dictated laws to the conquered, which were so rigidly enforced, and order so well preserved, that peace, quiet, and protection pervaded the land,—blessings heretofore, and since, almost unknown to the unfortunate Mexicans.

General Scott was delayed at Puebla for a considerable time, waiting for reinforcements to enable him to advance, the army and himself meantime impatient of delay and not in the best humor towards the government, whose fault it was. But reinforcements at length arrived, and the advance was resumed.

Meantime, a clerk in the State Department, Mr. N. P. Trist, was sent to Mexico to sound the government in regard to a treaty of peace, and with an ultimatum from our government. Arriving at the head-quarters of the army, without calling on and paying his respects to the commander-in-chief, he modestly requested the latter to forward from him to the Mexican government sealed packages the contents or purport of which were wholly unknown to the general! This was, of course, refused. It was virtually an attempt to supersede General Scott; to negotiate an armistice, or cessation of hostilities, irrespective of the general in the field,—an unheard-of transaction, and a gross insult to the general. Eventually, however, Mr. Trist was permitted to hold communication with the Mexican government, and to communicate the proposition of our own for a treaty of peace. Three commissioners were appointed, after the capture of the city of Mexico and the downfall of Santa Anna, to meet and negotiate with him,—not a minister, not an envoy, but a kind of commissioner, and a shrewd man. After some months' delay, these negotiations resulted in a treaty. By this Mexico ceded to the United States New Mexico and California, and fixed the Rio Grande

as the boundary of Texas, the United States agreeing to pay Mexico fifteen millions of dollars.

"The claims of American citizens against Mexico," says Colonel Benton, "were all assumed, limited to three and a quarter millions of dollars, which, considering that the war ostensibly originated in these claims, was a very small sum. . . . The treaty was a singular conclusion of the war. Undertaken to get indemnity for claims, the United States paid those claims herself. Fifteen millions of dollars were the full price of New Mexico and California,—the same that was paid for all Louisiana; so that, with the claims assumed, the amount paid for the Territories and the expenses of the war, the acquisitions were made at a dear rate. The same amount paid to Mexico without the war, and by treating her respectfully, in treating for a boundary to Texas, might have obtained the same cessions."

However dear the rate at which we obtained New Mexico and California might be considered at that time, and by Colonel Benton ten years after, no American now considers the acquisition of those Territories a dear bargain. To us, as a nation, they are of inestimable value,—a value not to be measured by any number of thousands of millions; though Colonel Benton is probably right in saying that all we obtained from Mexico might have been obtained for the same amount without a war with her.

The war and its results had disappointed Mr. Polk and his administration. It had been long, sanguinary, and costly, instead of being brief and bloodless, as had been expected. "Instead of getting a peace through the restoration of Santa Anna," says Colonel Benton, "that formidable chieftain had to be vanquished and expelled before negotiations could be commenced." It was making, and had made, great military reputations for *Whig* generals,—the last thing in the world Mr. Polk would have been instrumental in doing if he could have helped it. It was making *Whig* candidates, and, worst of all, a successful candidate, for the Presidency. Again I quote Colonel Benton:

"Great discontent was breaking out at home. The Congress

elections were going against the administration, and the aspirants for the Presidency in the cabinet were struck with terror at the view of the great military reputations which were growing up. The very successes of the American arms were becoming alarming to them: hence the anxious desire of Mr. Polk now to close the war. It was done by the treaty signed by Mr. Trist, on behalf of the United States, and three Mexican plenipotentiaries, which stands thus signed on the statute-book. But two ministers plenipotentiary and envoys extraordinary, Senator Sevier and Mr. Clifford, of Maine, now a Justice of the Supreme Court, were sent to Mexico to treat for peace, and found the work already done. They had the honor, however, of bringing home Mr. Trist's treaty, which was ratified by the Senate: a treaty they had no hand in making." And how was Mr. Trist treated? "Certainly," says Colonel Benton, "those who served the government well in that war with Mexico fared badly with the administration. Taylor, who had vanquished at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista, was quarreled with; Scott, who removed the obstacles to peace, and subdued the Mexican mind to peace, was superseded in the command of the army; . . . and Trist, who made the treaty which secured the objects of the war, was recalled and dismissed."

The military reputation which General Scott so greatly increased, and that which General Taylor won, were the fruits of Presidential folly and blindness. The jealousy and cruel usage of General Scott, had the government been a despotism, might have made his fate that of the renowned warrior under Justinian, Belisarius. After winning, by his splendid achievements, the highest reputation as a successful general, after carrying our victorious arms to the gates of Mexico, taking and occupying the city,—never in a single instance suffering a reverse, —he was superseded in the command of the army, arrested on the field of his glory, surrounded by officers devotedly attached to him and an army that idolized him, ordered before a court of inquiry, and finally home, to be tried on charges as groundless as they were malicious. But, after a tedious and perplexing trial,—himself prostrated and suffering severely

from a disease (camp dysentery) contracted in the performance of his duty in camp life,—the charges were withdrawn and the court dissolved, though he challenged a trial. If he was not honorably acquitted of every charge by the court, he had been, from the beginning, by the indignant and sympathizing American people. The important and stirring events I have alluded to in Mexico—the advance of our army from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, and the series of bloody conflicts and victories marking its progress—kept the country in a state of great excitement, though not in anxiety, as the eminent abilities of Scott as a commander gave assurance that he would finally "conquer a peace," and that no backward step would be taken till "the city of the Montezumas" was won, and the war honorably closed by a treaty dictated from its citadel; all which was done.

As some compensation to General Scott for what he had been made to suffer, Congress, on the 9th of March, passed a vote of thanks to him and the army he had commanded, and awarded him a gold medal for his great services.

WHIG NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1848.

The Whig National Convention was held at Philadelphia, on the 7th day of June, 1848, where a warm contest ensued between the friends of Mr. Clay and those of General Taylor, which was, after a number of ballotings for them and other candidates, decided in favor of General Taylor. Mr. Fillmore was nominated as Vice-President.

MEETING OF THE THIRTIETH CONGRESS.

The Thirtieth Congress met on the first Monday of December, 1847, and, a majority of the House being Whig, was organized by the election of Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, Speaker, Thomas Jefferson Campbell, of Tennessee, Clerk, Nathan Sargent, of Pennsylvania, Sergeant-at-Arms, and Robert E. Horner, of New Jersey, Door-keeper.

A future President was a member of that House, yet no one surmised the fact, and perhaps the last one to suspect such a thing was the individual himself. Mr. Lincoln was then more

noted for telling stories, and for his hearty laugh at and keen enjoyment of his own and others', than he was for his oratory, or the part he took in the business of the House. He was fond of fun and humor, was ever ready to match another's story by one of his own, and if a hearty laugh draws a nail from one's coffin, there could have been none left in his. He was genial and liked; but no one would have pointed him out as the future President, if called upon to select the man who was to be from among the members. Nor do I believe that he, if told to point out the future President then in that body, would have thought it possible that the lot was to fall to him.

And there was yet another in that body who was destined, by a most shocking and lamentable tragedy, to occupy the Presidential chair. Who could then have imagined the occurrence of such a marvelous concatenation of circumstances as would place Andrew Johnson, a most radical Democrat, on the ticket, as Vice-President, with Abraham Lincoln, a staunch Whig, as President! Truly the whirligig of politics makes strange bedfellows. Johnson was the antipodes of Lincoln, not only in politics, but in everything else. He was taciturn, ungenial, utterly devoid of humor, had no relish for a story, and no capacity to tell one; was as grave as a tomb-stone, and as guiltless of a loud, hearty laugh as an undertaker at a funeral. And yet those two opposites were brought together, for a short period, by the terrible events which could not then have been dreamed of, as President and Vice-President of the United States!

DEATH OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

In the House of Representatives, on the 21st of February, 1848, while petitions were being presented, suddenly there was a cry of "Mr. Adams! Mr. Adams!" and a rush of a number of members to his seat. The House was in great commotion, every eye being directed to his seat, and every countenance expressing intense anxiety.

Mr. Adams had in his hand a number of petitions, which he was about to present, and had begun to rise from his seat for that purpose, when he was struck with apoplexy, and came

near falling, catching hold of his desk to sustain himself, but unable to do so. The member sitting next to him, across a passage, seeing him falling, gave the alarm, and caught him instantly. There was no mistaking his condition, and he was immediately laid upon a sofa and first carried into the rotunda, and then into the Speaker's room, where a bed was quickly improvised, on which he was placed, and physicians sent for; but he was already beyond their skill.

He was not, at first, entirely insensible, but seemed to have a consciousness of his situation. He attempted to speak, but his speech was so low and indistinct that it was almost impossible to make out what he intended to say; but his colleague, Mr. Ashmun, who was assisting to place him on a sofa, thought he said, "last of earth—content;" intending to say, "This is the last of earth—I am content." But he almost immediately became wholly unconscious, and so remained till the vital breath left him. Members returned to the hall, only to disperse immediately by an adjournment, the Senate having also adjourned. The melancholy tidings spread with great rapidity through the city, and were telegraphed to every part of the Union.

The House met at the usual hour the next day, but only to adjourn, as Mr. Adams still continued to breathe, and so continued until about ten o'clock P.M. on the 23d. Being Sergeant-at-arms of the House, I was in almost constant attendance. About nine o'clock I was sent for by the Speaker, who thought the moment of dissolution was near, and that it was proper for the officers of the House to be present. I immediately repaired to the Capitol, and was present when Mr. Adams drew his last breath.

Having, as Sergeant-at-arms, the carrying out of the general arrangements of the funeral, the Speaker (Mr. Winthrop) remarked to me that, Mr. Adams being an ex-President, as well as a member of the House, and having filled many important stations, those arrangements should be consistent with his long and eminent public services and his reputation as a statesman. The suggestion was regarded and carried out. The funeral-car used on the occasion of General Harrison's obsequies was

called into requisition, and was now, as then, drawn by six white horses.

Mr. Adams's death was formally announced to the House by the Speaker on the morning of the 24th, and considering the long period he had been in the public service,—full sixty years,—and the various high stations he had filled, it was thought proper to depart from the usual custom of confining remarks upon the death of a member of the House to one or two persons. It was therefore arranged that eulogistic remarks should be made by some five or six gentlemen, representing different sections and political parties of the country.

On the day of the funeral the hall was filled to its utmost capacity, and the ceremonies were deeply impressive.

Mr. Adams's death at once removed all that feeling of asperity which had been created in the bosoms of some by the frequent collisions between himself and them on the subject of slavery, and by his consistent and persistent sustainment of the right of petition. Upon calm reflection, every one had to admit that the course of the venerable and illustrious statesman, scholar, and patriot was governed by principle, and to that he adhered with unyielding tenacity. Wherever that led he followed, regardless of the opinions of others and of all obstacles whatsoever: evidence of the highest degree of moral courage.

For many years, perhaps during the whole period that he was a member of the House, he was the most attractive and interesting object in the Representative hall, especially to strangers who looked down upon members from the galleries: he was the Mont Blanc of the whole group. With little hair upon his head, and that little as white as new-fallen snow, his bare head exhibited a polish as bright and reflective of the rays of light which fell upon it as Parian marble. If the stranger had never before seen Mr. Adams, his first, immediate, and eager question invariably was, "Who is that?' and when the answer was, "Mr. Adams," it was followed by a long, scrutinizing look, as if to photograph his appearance on the tablet of memory.

The remark of Governor McDowell, in his eulogistic speech, that Mr. Adams "was a living band of connection between the

present and the past," was strictly true; and how often this was made manifest, when, sometimes in self-defense against fierce attacks by men young enough to be his grandsons, and sometimes in sustaining a principle, he has, hour after hour, instructed the present generation by relating the sayings, opinions, and doings of the great lights of the past, with whom he was intimately associated, all ears attentive on such occasions, and every eye fixed upon "the old man eloquent"! It was on such occasions that his vast stores of encyclopedic knowledge were discovered and given out, and his infinite superiority to the *youths* around him was felt.

Aged as Mr. Adams was, no member of the House was absent from his seat less than he; and even during protracted sessions, when the sittings ran into late hours, sometimes into the night, and even into "the small hours of the morning," there in his seat, until the adjournment of the House, would be seen Mr. Adams, who never deserted a post of duty or left it on account of fatigue and exhaustion. And then, after these long sessions, it was his invariable practice to walk home, a distance of rather more than a mile.

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.

The Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore in the month of May, and nominated General Lewis Cass, of Michigan, for President, and William O. Butler, of Kentucky, for Vice-President.

Two delegations from New York presenting themselves, one representing the "old Hunker" wing of the party, and the other the "Barnburner" wing, both were excluded, so that the State had no voice in the nomination. Out of this fact arose, or it was made the pretense for, another convention and other Democratic nominations; namely, the Buffalo "Free-soil Convention," so called, which placed in nomination for President and Vice-President Martin Van Buren, of New York, and Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts.

The shibboleth of this party was "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, and Free Men." It was, of course, anti-slavery, but its adherents took the name of "Free-soilers."

Mr. Van Buren had been defeated in the Baltimore Convention four years before, when Mr. Polk was nominated by the Southern members of the convention,—by the contrivance of the two-thirds rule,—because he was opposed to the immediate annexation of Texas. He therefore had an account to settle with the Democratic party, and especially the Southern leaders of it. The Free-soil or anti-slavery party had shown strength enough in the State of New York in 1844 to defeat Mr. Clay, and it had increased in numbers considerably since then, not only in New York, but also in all the free States. This afforded him and his friends the "Barnburners" an opportunity so to divide the Democratic party as to defeat the regular candidates; that is, to divert enough Democrats from Cass and Butler to enable the Whigs to carry the State for Taylor and Fillmore. New York, then considered Democratic, was the battle-ground, and the loss of the State by the regular nominees would leave them in a minority in the electoral college. Such was the result. The Free-soilers elected General Taylor in 1848, as the Abolitionists elected Mr. Polk, a slavery-extensionist, in 1844. And so Mr. Van Buren settled his account with the Southern Democrats and closed his books, having no further dealings with them. They had defeated him, and, in turn, he had now defeated them.

Taylor and Fillmore received the votes of Massachusetts, 12; Rhode Island, 4; Connecticut, 6; Vermont, 6; New York, 36; New Jersey, 7; Pennsylvania, 26; Delaware, 3; Maryland, 8; North Carolina, 11; Georgia, 10; Kentucky, 12; Tennessee, 13; Louisiana, 6; Florida, 3. Total, 163.

Cass and Butler.—Maine, 9; New Hampshire, 6; Virginia, 17; South Carolina, 8; Ohio, 23; Mississippi, 6; Indiana, 12; Illinois, 9; Alabama, 9; Missouri, 7; Arkansas, 3; Michigan, 5; Texas, 4; Iowa, 4; Wisconsin, 4. Total, 124.

Deducting the vote of New York (36) from the total vote for Taylor and Fillmore would leave them but 127; and adding it to the total for Cass and Butler would give them 160: so that New York turned the scale and decided the election. The "Free-soil ticket" did not receive a single electoral vote.

OREGON AND THE ORDINANCE OF 1787.

The first session of the Thirtieth Congress was, like all others immediately preceding a Presidential election, prolific in political speeches,—the Whigs attacking and criminating the administration, and the friends of those in power defending them as best they could. Among the bills brought before Congress of general importance was the bill establishing the Territory of Oregon, which, having passed the House, came up in the Senate, where it was amended by incorporating in it the famous ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory. The amendment was strongly opposed by Southern Senators, and especially by Mr. Calhoun, who, as usual, sounded the tocsin of alarm to the South, and predicted dire consequences to the Union, declaring, indeed, after the passage of the bill, that "the separation of the North and the South is completed;" that "the great strife between the North and the South is ended." He charged "that the North was determined to exclude the property of the slaveholder, and of course the slaveholder himself, from its territory." "It was a question not involving territorial government, but the continuance of the Union." Mr. Calhoun, with even more than his usual warmth, earnestness, and emphasis, invoked the South to maintain her rights, and denounced any Southern man who would not stand by those rights.

Mr. Calhoun's doctrine now was, that Congress had no right to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the Territories at all, though he had at the same time voted for an amendment, offered by Mr. Douglas, to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean, thereby attempting to legislate on the forbidden subject.

The slavery agitation was rapidly increasing, Mr. Calhoun himself being the chief agitator, doing more than any other individual—as he had more influence—to stir the Southern mind to discontent and animosity, and to bring about the disunion conventions which followed his inflammatory harangues and stirring appeals. The people of the South were made to believe that by the exclusion of slavery from a Territory the South

was robbed of her share of the Territory, because her people could not take their slaves into it; not remembering that slavery existed only under local State laws, which deprived the slave of his natural rights, to be resumed the moment he passed out of their jurisdiction, as he did when he was taken by his master beyond the bounds of the State in which they existed.

Mr. Calhoun was too sagacious not to see this, though he did not choose to announce it. But when the Territories of New Mexico and California were acquired and came to be the subject of Congressional legislation,—coming to us free,—how was slavery to be got into them if Congress had no power to legislate on the subject of slavery in the Territories? Here was a new dilemma, a new obstacle to be overcome. But Mr. Calhoun's genius and invention were equal to the occasion.

Mr. Douglas, who in subsequent years figured so prominently in national affairs, was now in the Senate. Inordinately ambitious of attaining the Presidency, young as he was, and sagacious enough to perceive that the road to that high station was held in strict control by Southern politicians, who allowed no one to pass the final barrier but such as yielded homage to the South, he was early at work conciliating those whose favor was necessary to the fruition of his ambitious aspirations, and the proposition made by him to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific was one of those concessions to the South by which he endeavored to win her confidence and favor. Mr. Van Buren had tried the policy of being "a Northern man with Southern principles;" and where was he now? We shall see in the sequel where this course stranded Mr. Douglas.

PROPOSITION TO EXTEND THE CONSTITUTION OVER CALIFORNIA. —EARNEST DEBATE THEREON.

At the very heel of the last session of the Thirtieth Congress arose an important debate on the proposition to extend the Constitution over California, in which Mr. Webster and Mr. Calhoun were the principal speakers. It arose thus: The civil and diplomatic appropriation bill, which had originated in and passed the House, came up to the Senate, and was there disposed of, so far as appropriations were concerned, and should

have been immediately returned to the House. But Mr. Isaac P. Walker, Senator from Wisconsin, representing, and elected by, an anti-slavery State, moved an amendment to the bill, wholly ungermane to it, providing for government in the ceded Territories of California and New Mexico, and, finally, another to extend the Constitution over those Territories, supporting his amendments by an elaborately-prepared speech, which was an appeal to the North to accept and sustain these amendments for the purpose of peace and harmony with the South.

Mr. Walker's amendments were of so novel and extraordinary a character, in Mr. Webster's view, as to bring him to his feet, and, in reply, he first cleared away the mist that hung around the proposition. "It was of importance," he said, "that we should seek to have clear ideas and correct notions of the question which this amendment presented, and especially that we should seek to get some conception of what is meant by the proposition, in a law, to extend the Constitution of the United States to the Territories.'"

At first thought, what was there extraordinary or improper in the proposition "to extend the Constitution of the United States to the Territories"? Why not? "Why, sir," replied Mr. Webster, "the thing is utterly impossible. All the legislation in the world, in this general form, could not accomplish it. There is no cause for the operation of the legislative power in such a manner as that. The Constitution—what is it? We extend the Constitution by law to Territories? What is the Constitution of the United States? Is not its very first principle that all within its influence and comprehension shall be represented in the legislature which it establishes, with not only a right of debate and a right to vote in both Houses of Congress, but a right to partake in the choice of the President and Vice-President? And can we by law extend these rights, or any of them, to a Territory of the United States? It is altogether impracticable. . . . There is no such thing as extending the Constitution. The Constitution is extended over the United *States*, and nothing else. . . . There is a want of accuracy of ideas in this respect that is quite remarkable among eminent gentlemen. It seems to be taken for granted

that the right of trial by jury, the habeas corpus, and every principle designed to protect personal liberty, is extended by force of the Constitution itself over every new Territory. But that proposition cannot be maintained at all.

"Sir, if the hopes of some gentlemen were realized, and Cuba were to become a possession of the United States by cession, does anybody suppose that the habeas corpus and the trial by jury would be established in it by the mere act of cession? Sir, the whole authority of Congress on this subject is embraced in that very short provision, that Congress shall have power to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the *Territories* of the United States. The word is Territories; for it is quite evident that the compromises of the Constitution looked to no new acquisitions to form new Territories. But they have been acquired from time to time; new Territories have been regarded as coming under that general provision for making rules for *Territories*. We have never had a *Territory* governed as the United States are governed. The Legislature and Judiciary of Territories have always been established by a law of Congress. These principles do not *proprie vigore* apply to any one of the Territories of the United States, because that Territory, while a Territory, does not become a part, and is no part, of the United States."

Conscious of his own inability to cope with Mr. Webster in arguing a constitutional question, Mr. Walker prudently left the further defense of the proposition he had fathered and brought forward to him who was believed to be the real parent, and who at once rose and replied to Mr. Webster. Mr. Calhoun said it had been said by several Senators that the Constitution of the United States does not extend to the Territories. "That is the point," said Mr. Calhoun; "and I am happy to hear this proposition thus asserted, as it will have the effect to narrow very greatly the controversy between the North and the South as it regards the slavery question in connection with the Territories. It is an implied admission, on the part of those gentlemen, that, if the Constitution does extend to the Territories, the South will be protected in the enjoyment of its property,—that it will be under the shield of the Constitution.

Then the simple question is, Does the Constitution extend to the Territories, or does it not extend to them? Why, the Constitution interprets itself. It pronounces itself to be the supreme law of the land."

Mr. Webster, in his seat.—"What land?"

Mr. Calhoun.—"The land,—the Territories of the United States are a part of the land." . . . He contended that the Territories belong to us; that is, that they are the property of the States of the Union, and that we, as the representatives of these States, have the right to exercise all that authority and jurisdiction which ownership carries with it. This was too plain, he thought, for argument. It was self-demonstrating. The mere statement of the fact was stronger than any argument; it was sufficient to carry conviction with it.

Mr. Calhoun's design—in which he was vigorously seconded by the whole South—at this time was to make slavery national, and not sectional. This design took possession of the Southern mind immediately upon the acquisition of the new Territories, where slavery did not exist. Mr. Calhoun's resolutions and this attempt to extend the Constitution over those Territories were parts of the same purpose.

These attempts to establish slavery upon free soil were repugnant to the principles of portions of the Northern Democracy, and tended to disintegrate the Democratic party as a national party and to strengthen the fast-growing Free-soil organization, which finally became the Republican party. Democrats who opposed the propositions of their brethren of the South did not join the Whigs, but the Free-soilers. The slavery question was the only one before the country sufficiently powerful to break long-existing party ties. Upon it Southern Whigs also separated themselves from Northern, and thus this question tended to sectionalize all parties.

Mr. Calhoun's proposition, through Mr. Walker, of Wisconsin, to get Congress to declare the Constitution and certain laws extended over the new Territories, with the view to carry slavery there, was carried by a very small majority in the Senate, but coming to the House it met with opposition, though it was near being concurred in, as an amendment to the civil

and diplomatic appropriation bill,—before mentioned,—and the pro-slavery men threatened to defeat it if the amendment was not agreed to. Finally, in the midst of great excitement and confusion,—it was the last night of the session of the Thirtieth Congress,—a motion was made by some one on the Whig side of the House to concur with the Senate, *with an amendment*, which was, *that the existing laws of the Territories should remain in force till changed by consent of Congress.* This proposition was carried by a very close vote. As the existing laws prohibited slavery, this amendment completely destroyed the Walker Senate amendment.

On its return to the Senate, after twelve o'clock at night, considerable excitement prevailed, and, several Senators refusing to vote, deeming the session closed, the bill came near being lost; but Mr. Webster finally succeeded in getting a vote, whereby the Senate receded from its (Walker's) amendment, and the bill was passed. Colonel Benton charges Mr. Calhoun with pushing this newly-invented slavery dogma to the very verge of breaking up the government.

MR. POLK'S DEATH.

Mr. Polk left the Presidential chair and the city of Washington an unhappy man, broken down in health by incessant official labors, care, and anxiety. The events of his administration, and his own agency in bringing those events about, were but poorly calculated to produce, upon a review of them in the leisure of retirement, that serenity of mind and calmness of self-approbation so essential to the overworked public servant and indispensable to the recuperative powers of body and mind. His health continued to fail till he fell a victim to the insatiable destroyer, on the 15th day of June, a little more than three months after leaving Washington.

CHAPTER VIII.

General Taylor inaugurated President.—Appoints his Cabinet.—New Department, that of the Interior, established.—Combined Southern Movement on the Subject of Slavery.—First Session of the Thirty-first Congress.—Increasing Antagonism between the North and the South on the Slavery Question.—Difficulty in electing a Speaker of the House.—Southern Whigs refuse to vote for Mr. Winthrop.—William J. Brown intrigues with the Free-soilers; is detected.—Mr. Toombs threatens Disunion.—Other Southern Members equally imbued with Disunion Feelings.—Stirring Scene between Mr. Duer, of New York, and Mr. Meade, of Virginia.—Duel prevented.—Mr. Cobb elected Speaker.—General Taylor's First and only Annual Message.—Policy of the Administration.—Collector of Customs, Postmaster, etc., appointed for San Francisco.—The South violently opposed to the Policy of General Taylor, to leave the People of California free to form a Constitution, leaving Slavery to take care of itself.—Mr. Clay again returns to the Senate.—Submits Resolutions declaratory of what he considers it necessary Congress should do in regard to California, Utah, and New Mexico.—His Resolutions referred to a Select Committee.—They report Compromise Measures.—Debate upon them prolonged.—Mr. Benton violently opposes Compromise Measures.—Scene between Colonel Benton and Mr. Foote.—Mr. Calhoun's Last Speech.—His Death.—Defeat of the Compromise Bill.—Admission of California.—Death of General Taylor.

MARCH 5, 1849.—GENERAL TAYLOR'S ADMINISTRATION.

General Taylor was sworn into office on the 5th of March, the 4th falling on Sunday, by Chief-Justice Taney, ex-President Polk being present on the occasion. His inaugural address was remarkable only for its brevity, simplicity, good idiomatic English, and the absence of great promises in high-sounding phrases.

During the preceding session of Congress a new department, called the Department of the Interior, had been formed.

His cabinet was composed as follows: Secretary of State, John M. Clayton, of Delaware; Secretary of the Treasury, William M. Meredith, of Pennsylvania; Secretary of the Interior, Thomas Ewing, of Ohio; Secretary of War, George W. Craw-

ford, of Georgia; Secretary of the Navy, William Ballard Preston, of Virginia; Postmaster-General, Jacob Collamer, of Vermont; Attorney-General, Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland.

However able and successful as a military commander, General Taylor having never been in civil life, but all the time in the army, and much of it on the frontier, he had had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the public men of the country. Of course, when elected, and under the necessity of selecting his cabinet, he had to rely on the advice of some friend. Fortunately, he had a judicious friend whose counsel he could safely trust,—Mr. Crittenden,—a wise, disinterested, and patriotic counselor.

As I am writing this, the telegraph announces the death of Mr. Meredith, of Philadelphia, whose departure leaves Mr. Reverdy Johnson the sole surviving member of General Taylor's cabinet.

Though an octogenarian, Mr. Johnson is fortunate in being blessed with a rare degree of health and vigor of body, while his intellect exhibits no sign of decay or impaired powers. May he be long spared to enjoy the universal respect of the American people, to whom his name is as a household word.

A considerable number of removals and appointments were made of heads of bureaus, marshals, district attorneys, customs-officers, clerks, etc., though not so many as had been made by General Jackson, General Harrison, or Mr. Polk, on their several accessions to office. Mr. Polk had been exceedingly proscriptive of Whigs, so that the administration of General Taylor found few but bitter opponents in office.

COMBINED SOUTHERN MOVEMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.

During the latter part of the second session of the Thirtieth Congress, that is, early in 1849, frequent meetings of Southern members, or members from slave States, were held at night, to consider the state of things between the North and the South, to discuss what were termed the aggressions of the former upon the rights of the latter, and to devise ways and means of putting an effectual stop to these, or, if that were

impracticable, to consider the other alternative, separation from the North,—in other words, a dissolution of the Union.

As none but members from the slave States were admitted into these meetings, and all reporters were strictly excluded, for information as to what was proposed and what was done at these meetings we are wholly dependent on Colonel Benton, a Senator from a slave State, who has given the world some account of them in his "Thirty Years' View." It was known to Northern members that such meetings were held, and they could be in no doubt as to the purposes for which they were held, but they were unable to learn what had been proposed in them, or what was or had been done, what conclusions come to, etc.

Colonel Benton states that as many as seventy or eighty members from slave States attended at first, about one-half to prevent the others from doing mischief. The numbers gradually decreased. Mr. Calhoun seems to have been the master-spirit of the movement, as the whole South looked to him as their great leader and champion of the cause of slavery. A grand committee of fifteen was appointed, of which Mr. Calhoun was, of course, the chairman; and out of this a sub-committee of five, Mr. Calhoun at the head of it, was appointed to prepare a manifesto, which had already been prepared by the head of the committee, and which was finally adopted.

This manifesto was an elaborate statement of the causes of complaint which the South claimed to have against the North, an enunciation of Southern doctrines, and a solemn appeal to the South for union and concert among themselves in their contest for their rights with the North.

A few only of the members from the slave States signed the paper,—not more than one-third. It was not intended by these forty slaveholders that action should cease with the issuance of this paper: on the contrary, this was but the incipient step which was to lead to important measures, such as might possibly result in a dismemberment of the Union. It could hardly be doubted that this was contemplated, if not desired, by some of the signers,—those from South Carolina especially. The words in the last sentence but one of the address, "and for

this purpose to adopt all *necessary measures*," intimated that something more was to be done,—steps taken to carry out the purposes of a united South. And the first step to that end was a convention or congress of the whole South, which was soon called by the Legislatures of South Carolina and Mississippi, to meet at Nashville, Tennessee. Of that I shall give an account in its proper place.

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-FIRST CONGRESS.

The growing antagonism between the North and the South on the subject of slavery, of which I have just spoken, was painfully exemplified by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Congress, in its attempt to organize by electing a Speaker. There were in the House one hundred and five Whigs and one hundred and twelve Democrats, who rallied under their respective party banners and party designations. Outside of these there were thirteen Free-soilers, of whom nine had seceded from the Whig party and four had belonged to the Democratic party. But two Southern Whigs — King, of Georgia, and Gentry, of Tennessee — and two Northern Whigs — Palfrey, of Massachusetts, and Julian, of Indiana—were absent. Besides these there were six Southern Whigs who would not vote for Mr. Winthrop, the regular Whig candidate, not considering him sufficiently hostile to the Free-soilers. It was, therefore, found impossible to unite a majority of the votes of the House upon either of the regular nominees for Speaker, of the two parties,—Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, as the Democratic and Mr. Winthrop as the Whig nominee. The Clerk of the last House of Representatives,—Thirtieth Congress,—Mr. Thomas Jefferson Campbell, called the House to order, and conducted its proceedings, as its presiding officer, until a Speaker was elected, which was on the 22d day of December, and on the sixty-third ballot.

The first vote taken for Speaker disclosed the demoralization of the old parties and the probable impossibility of uniting a majority of the whole upon any one as Speaker. The first vote stood, for Howell Cobb, of Georgia, 103; Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, 96; David Wilmot, of Pennsyl-

vania, 8; Meredith P. Gentry, of Tennessee, 6; Horace Mann, of Massachusetts, 2; James Thompson, of Pennsylvania, 1; Chauncey Cleveland, of Connecticut, 1; James A. Seddon, of Virginia, 1; James L. Orr, of South Carolina, 1; David T. Disney, of Ohio, 1; James M. Root, of Ohio, 1.

The voting went on from day to day, amid great and constantly increasing excitement, alternated by boisterous, inflammatory, and denunciatory speeches, chiefly by Southern members, against the hostile, anti-slavery feelings and doings of the North, for their interference with the domestic affairs of the South. It was quite apparent that the longer the balloting continued, and the more freedom of speech was indulged, the more irate the members became, and the less likely were they to concentrate a majority of either side upon any member so as to elect him Speaker.

Among the large number of Democrats for whom scattering votes had been cast was Mr. Wm. J. Brown, of Indiana. As the vote for Mr. Cobb, the regular Democratic candidate, had greatly fallen off after the thirteenth ballot, and continued to do so for some days, an ineffectual effort was made to concentrate the vote of the Democrats upon Mr. Potter, of Ohio, whose highest vote was 88, Mr. Winthrop's standing for eight or ten ballotings at 101 and 102. Mr. Potter, after the thirty-first ballot, rose and declined being any longer a candidate or being voted for; whereupon efforts were made on the next ballot to concentrate the Democratic votes upon Mr. Brown. On the thirty-second ballot he received 53 votes; on the thirty-third, 80; on the thirty-fourth, 84; on the thirty-fifth, 88; on the thirty-sixth, 97, while only four votes were cast for Mr. Cobb. On the thirty-seventh ballot Mr. Brown received 107; Mr. Winthrop, 101; Mr. Cobb, 0. On the thirty-eighth ballot Mr. Brown received 109; Mr. Winthrop, 100; Mr. Cobb, 0. The next, the thirty-ninth, showed the same result; which being announced to the House, intense excitement prevailed.

It was quite evident that Mr. Brown was gaining rapidly, and would, after a few more ballots, receive a majority of the whole number of votes of the House unless something should intervene to prevent such a result. But a suspicion prevailed

among some of his supporters that all was not right. Democratic Free-soilers, who had persistently refused to vote for Mr. Cobb or Mr. Potter, were cheerfully voting for him. Why was this? The question which was privately put by many no one seemed able to answer; but it indicated an uneasy feeling.

Before the House proceeded to another vote, Mr. Winthrop rose and said it was well known to many of his friends, and, he believed, to most of those who had thus far honored him with their support, that he should have withdrawn his name long ago from this protracted contest if they had allowed him to do so. His personal desire not to stand in the way of a satisfactory organization of the House, or indeed any organization, had been repeatedly expressed, as he believed the highest interests of the country, the peace and safety of the Union, demanded that an organization of some sort should be effected without delay. But, as he had seen his friends continuing to claim that his name was at their control and not his, he had allowed the contest to go on until the present moment. He now begged leave to say publicly, as he had often said privately, that, while he thanked his friends for the devoted support they had given him, it would afford him the utmost satisfaction if they would concentrate their efforts upon some other candidate; and he should most cordially unite with them on any one they might adopt.

This was at the close of the 15th day of December, or the twelfth day of the session, the House adjourning immediately after Mr. Winthrop had thus spoken. The course taken by Mr. Winthrop added to the existing complications and the embarrassment of the Whigs.

Next morning another vote was taken, Mr. Brown having 112,—within two votes of a majority of the whole,—while no other had over 26; Mr. Duer, Whig, having that number. But what was significant in this vote was the fact that Mr. Wilmot, Mr. Durkee, Mr. Giddings, and Mr. Preston King, the most ultra Free-soilers, were found voting for Mr. Brown. This increased the excitement already pervading the House, which was now in a perfect ferment.

Mr. Stanley, of North Carolina, now rose and proceeded to

make some remarks, charging that there was "something rotten in Denmark." He intimated that there was trickery going on, and he had too much regard for his political opponents to wish to see them involve themselves in a complication they would afterwards be ashamed of.

Mr. Brown, meantime, was in a most nervous state of excitement.

Mr. Ashmun, of Massachusetts, now rose and said, "Will the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Baily] allow me to put a question to him?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Baily.

Mr. Ashmun.—"Has not a correspondence taken place between the member from Indiana [Mr. Brown] and some member of the Free-soil party, in which he has pledged himself to construct the committees in a manner satisfactory to them?"

Mr. Baily.—"I know of no such correspondence. Is the gentleman authorized to say that there has been such a one? If so, what is his authority?"

Mr. Ashmun.—"Common rumor."

Mr. Baily, turning to Mr. Brown, who was now a pitiable object to behold, inquired if any such correspondence had taken place. Mr. Brown nervously shook his head. Thereupon Mr. Baily said, "I am authorized to say that no such correspondence has taken place."

Mr. Root, of Ohio, one of the most earnest of Free-soilers,—indeed, an ultra Abolitionist,—having obtained the floor, Mr. Baily left the hall, but soon returned and obtained the floor from Mr. Root, for a personal explanation.

Mr. Baily said he had had a conversation with Mr. Brown since he last spoke, and it was due to himself and the House to say that he was then mistaken in his reply to Mr. Ashmun; that a correspondence had taken place between the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Brown) and the Free-soilers; but that Mr. Brown had assured him he had refused to pledge himself. But the correspondence would be produced and speak for itself.

The House continued to be highly excited, and many members spoke out their feelings. Mr. Wilmot explained the understanding entered into between the Free-soilers, through

him, and Mr. Brown. He had not a copy of his letter to Mr. Brown, but stated its substance, and read Mr. Brown's reply. Mr. Wilmot's letter was subsequently produced and read.

Mr. Brown had fully pledged himself, in case he should be elected Speaker, to constitute the committees named in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Wilmot and his friends.

The explanations of Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Brown, and the reading of the correspondence, kept the House in a high state of commotion. Mr. Baily confessed that he had felt highly indignant when the gentlemen from North Carolina (Mr. Stanley) and from Massachusetts (Mr. Ashmun) had made the remarks they had, because he thought their insinuations unfounded and illiberal. But he now rejoiced that they were made, and he thanked them for doing what they did. It led to a disclosure to which the country was entitled, and he thanked God that the disclosure had been made in time to save them from a load of obloquy.

Mr. Brown was now "a dead cock in the pit." But both voting and debating were resumed, and went on with renewed spirit, and so did the noise and confusion.

On the next day, 13th December, the storm raged with more violence than ever, and threats of disunion were fiercely thrown out by Southern members. The House was in an uproar, and all was excitement and irritation. Among others, Mr. Toombs, of Georgia, spoke. Usually loud and boisterous, he was now excessively so, in pouring forth defiance and denunciation upon "the enemies and aggressors of the South."

"The time has come," Mr. Toombs said, "when I shall not only utter my opinions, but make them the basis of my political action here. I do not, then, hesitate to avow before this House and the country, and in presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you seek to drive us from the Territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon half the States of this confederacy, I AM FOR DISUNION; and if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions of right and duty, I will devote all I am and all I have on earth to its consummation."

On the same day, Mr. Stephens, of Georgia, said, "I tell this House that when the Wilmot Proviso is consummated, in my section of the country, from that day the Union is dissolved, and, whether the North believes it or not, it will be found to be true. I tell gentlemen, from whatever section they come, not to be deceived on this subject. We will not submit to aggressions on our rights. Every word said on this subject by my colleague [Mr. Toombs] meets a response in my heart. If gentlemen suppose that by singing hymns to the Union it can be preserved, they deceive themselves."

Mr. Colcock, of South Carolina, following and replying to Mr. Baker, of Illinois (who had spoken of the fervid denunciations of the North by the South, but expressed strong doubts whether the South were really in earnest in their threats of disunion, or would ever attempt to secede), said that he desired to regard the question in all its solemnity and importance, and in full view of all the consequences that surround it. "In this spirit I declare that I believe the South is prepared to teach the North that she is in earnest; and I here pledge myself that if any bill should be passed at this session of Congress abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or incorporating the Wilmot Proviso in any form, I will introduce a resolution in this House declaring, in terms, that THIS UNION OUGHT TO BE DISSOLVED."

Mr. Hilliard, of Alabama, declared that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Stephens) had fully expressed his own views on this most important subject. Other gentlemen from the South delivered similar sentiments, showing great unanimity of opinion. Mr. Hilliard, Messrs. Toombs and Stephens, of Georgia, Mr. Morton, of Virginia, and Mr. Cabell, of Florida, were the Whigs who refused to vote for Mr. Winthrop.

These inflammatory speeches had proceeded for some time, when Mr. Duer, of Oswego, New York, rose and proceeded to express his views. He was far from being ultra; was conservative, an able and self-possessed speaker, and had much influence with his brother Whigs. He desired to organize the House; the people demanded it; every principle of liberty, union, and good government demanded it; it was due to their

own dignity and due to their constituents that this should be accomplished. But it could not be effected without a giving way in some quarter,—some yielding. For his part, he was ready to make any proper concession—was ready, if necessary, to vote for a man of either party, Whig, Democrat, or Free-soiler—to effect an organization. But there was one class of men for whom he could not vote. He would never, under any circumstances, vote to put a man in the Speaker's chair who would in any event advocate or sanction a dissolution of the Union.

At this point a scene occurred which baffles description.

Mr. Bayly, from his seat, said, "There are no *disunionists*."

Mr. Duer.—"There are."

Some one said, "Point out one."

At that moment Mr. Meade, of Virginia, happened to pass in front of Mr. Duer, who said, "There's one;" pointing to Mr. Meade, who, in a loud and angry tone, exclaimed, "IT IS FALSE!"

Mr. Duer instantly responded, in a clear, ringing voice, "YOU L-I-E, SIR."

Had a bomb exploded in the hall, there could not have been greater excitement. The members on the Democratic side were in an instant on their feet, looking daggers, and as if they intended to use them. I was sitting in the Sergeant-at-arms' chair, on the right of the Speaker's, and, seeing the movement on that side of the hall, went with rapid strides to Mr. Duer's desk; but the movements and the countenances of the Southern members appeared so threatening that I hurried back, unlocked the case in which the mace of the House was kept, took it on my arm, bearing it erect, returned, and stood by the side of Mr. Duer.

The mace being the symbol of the authority of the House, and being thus placed in full view, seemed to recall the over-excited members to their senses. Almost every man in the hall was upon his feet, but the movement to leave their seats, which had begun on the Democratic side, ceased, and in a few minutes quiet was restored.

During the whole of this outburst and confusion, Mr. Duer stood as unmoved as a marble statue. He was the only man

in the hall not excited. When it was over, he apologized to the House, saying that he had been suddenly provoked into using the expression he did.

The occasion of his pointing to Mr. Meade, when asked to indicate a disunionist, was the fact, in the first place, that he happened to be passing in full view; and in the next place, he had, just previously, published and sent to members of Congress a speech he had lately delivered, in which Northern men saw disunion sentiments. Mr. Duer had, of course, read the speech.

A challenge was very soon sent to Mr. Duer by Mr. Meade, and as Mr. Duer came of a fighting stock, or ancestry,—Lord Stirling, of Revolutionary memory,—it was expected that a meeting would take place.

But friends interfered to effect an amicable settlement. This they found not a very easy task. Mr. Duer was not so unwilling to fight as some had supposed he would be. At last, however, it was settled, Mr. Conrad, of Louisiana, acting as the friend of Mr. Duer, and Mr. Bayly, of Virginia, as the friend of Mr. Meade.

The balloting for Speaker went on until the 22d day of December, and it had reached the sixty-second ballot, when Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, was elected, but not by a majority of the whole number of votes. The House had the day before agreed to a proposition submitted by Mr. Stanton, of Tennessee, namely, that the House would, the next day, take three ballots, and if no one should have a majority of the whole number on the first two ballots, then, on the third, the person having the highest number of votes, provided such number were a majority of a quorum, should be the Speaker. Mr. Cobb did not receive a majority of the whole number, but a plurality over others, and was declared the Speaker. And thus, after a delay of three weeks of confusion and angry display of passion and sectional hostility, the House was organized.

The President's first and only annual message was transmitted to Congress on Monday, the House being organized on Saturday.

POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

The close of the Mexican war left upon our hands, by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the extensive Territories of California and New Mexico, in which civil governments were to be instituted, they being now under military governments. As slavery did not exist in these Territories under Mexican rule,—it having been prohibited there,—it could not exist under our jurisdiction, unless established by act of Congress, as, by the law of nations, the local laws of a conquered country remain in full force until changed by the conquering power.

But this well-established rule was now controverted by Mr. Calhoun and the Hotspurs of the South, who, as I have stated, first took the ground, directly in the teeth of their former positions, that Congress had the right to legislate on the subject of slavery in the Territories, and consequently to legislate slavery into a Territory. Finding, however, that Congress would not do this, by extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, —making all south of that line slave territory,—they contended that the Constitution of the United States at once, upon the acquisition of any territory, extended itself over it, became "the law of the land," and protected the master's right to his property in his slaves.

The South were clamorous for what they claimed to be their equal rights in the Territories, "the common property of all," and were, as usual, making threats of disunion, as we have seen, unless the North would concede to them their rights. This was the state of the country when General Taylor entered upon the duties of chief magistrate; and one of the first duties that devolved upon him was to adopt some policy in regard to these acquired Territories, and especially in regard to California, which was the principal point of attraction for emigrants from the North and from the South. His course was soon decided, and steps taken to carry out his policy. A collector of customs and a postmaster at San Francisco, an Indian agent, and some other Federal officers were appointed to execute the United States laws, which had been extended by Congress over the acquired Territories, and Mr. Thomas

Butler King, of Georgia, was also appointed a special agent of the government, and instructed to traverse California and urge the people to take the necessary steps to form a constitution for themselves, and make an early application to Congress for admission as a State into the Union. This was done. A convention was held and a constitution formed, which was transmitted to the President, and by him, early in the session of Congress which ensued, was sent, with a special message, recommending their application for admission to favorable consideration.

In regard to New Mexico and Utah, the plan of the administration was to give them Territorial governments, leaving them to ripen into States in their own due time, abstaining from the introduction of the question of slavery, to be settled by themselves whenever they should form constitutions and apply for admission into the Union as States.

This policy was supported almost unanimously by the Whigs and some of the Democrats of the North, but opposed by all the Democrats and most of the Whigs of the South. It was certainly conciliatory, and based upon the assumption, as expressed in Mr. Clayton's instructions to Mr. King, that "the laws of California and New Mexico, as they existed at the conclusion of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, regulating the relations of the inhabitants with each other, will necessarily remain in force in the Territories. Their relations with the former governments have been dissolved, and new relations created between them and the government of the United States; but the existing laws regulating the relations of the people with each other [excluding slavery] will continue until others shall supersede them." In other words, these Territories, being free, will remain so until a competent tribunal shall introduce slavery into them.

But Southern men were violently opposed to anything which should, as they expressed it, deprive them of the right of emigrating to California with their "property." On this point many of them were prepared for armed resistance.

The leading Southern Whigs, such as Goggin, Preston, and Flournoy, of Virginia, Badger, Clingman, and Barringer, of

North Carolina, Stephens and Toombs, of Georgia, had been active in procuring General Taylor's nomination and election; and they now exerted all their influence with him to prevent the adoption of the policy indicated. Messrs. Toombs and Stephens, representing themselves and the Southern Whigs generally, had a long interview with the President, but, finding him inflexible, left the White House animated by a spirit of determined hostility to him and most of his cabinet, Mr. Clayton especially.

MR. CLAY ONCE MORE IN THE SENATE.

Although Mr. Clay had resigned his seat in the Senate in the spring of 1842, and taken a formal leave of that body, not expecting ever to return to it, yet he was again elected by the Legislature of Kentucky, and took his seat at the opening of the first session of the Thirty-first Congress. The ostensible reason for his being again returned to that body was, that the discontents and demonstrations of the South on the subject of slavery, and the pertinacity with which Southern extremists insisted on having their share of the Territories, with the right to take their slaves with them and hold them in bondage, on the one hand, and the increased agitation of the slavery question at the North on the other, required the presence of such men as himself in Congress to stem the current of disorganization and restore peace and quiet to the country.

This, if it were the sole motive of the election of Mr. Clay, is not inconsistent with the supposition that he was desirous to return once more to active public life, to take part again in the debates of the Senate, place himself again prominently before the nation, and perhaps render the nation great and important services in quelling the agitation that was going on, and in bringing the two sections once more into harmony and concord.

Nor is it derogating from Mr. Clay's exalted patriotism and desire to render further service to the country to suppose that, accustomed as he had been nearly all his life to the excitement of debate in public bodies, or other phases of public life no less exciting, he found retirement irksome, and longed to be in the

arena and cope with the ablest in debate upon great national topics. If we come to this conclusion, we do so upon the principles of human nature. Life-long habits are not easily changed, nor the desire to resume, when once forced to forego them for a time, easily overcome. They become our masters, and we cannot, without great effort, successfully resist them.

Mr. Clay had been thrust aside by the Whig party as too old, and as unavailable as a candidate for President. Possibly he might have entertained a desire to don again the Senatorial robe, to show that party and the world that, though more than threescore years and ten had passed over his head, his mind was not impaired, neither was his eye dimmed; that he was still equal to great occasions and able to grapple with great subjects. It might be uncharitable to suppose that he indulged a slight pique towards General Taylor and his cabinet, and came here with a resolve to show them that he owed not his power to the office of President; that, having ever been, he would still be a *leader* and no *follower;* that, whatever might be the policy of the administration in regard to the settlement of the questions that disturbed the country, he should have a policy of his own,—one with which his name should be connected, and the glory of which, if successful, should redound to him. Yet not only was this supposition thrown out, but it was distinctly and angrily charged by a portion of the press at the North, as the antagonism which grew up between the administration and Mr. Clay became more and more apparent.

At the opening of the session he respectfully requested that he might not be placed on any of the standing committees of the Senate, having in view probably the labors which he afterwards assumed. His wish was complied with. Various bills and resolutions had been introduced into the Senate to admit California as a State, to settle the boundaries of Texas, and in regard to the Territories, when Mr. Clay, on the 29th of January, 1850, submitted a series of resolutions, declaratory of what he deemed it necessary that Congress should do with a view to adjust the questions and topics agitated between the North and the South.

In presenting these resolutions Mr. Clay delivered an elabo-

rate and conciliatory speech, marked by his usual ability and power, portraying the danger of the country arising out of conflicting views and interests of the two sections of the country, and the persistent agitation of these matters with the use of provoking language by each towards the other, and the necessity of the adoption of some measures that should allay excitement and restore peace and harmony, which measures must grow out of mutual concessions for mutual equivalents.

The annunciation of the policy of the administration in regard to California and the Territories of New Mexico and Utah, and the speech and resolutions of Mr. Clay, had a soothing effect upon the country. The public mind was tranquillized, and prepared to second any efforts to settle amicably the various matters which had been irritating it.

His resolutions were referred to a select committee of thirteen, of which he was chairman. They proposed: 1st, the admission of California as a State; 2d, Territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah; 3d, the settlement of the western boundaries of Texas; 4th, the abolition of the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia; 5th, some additional legislation in regard to the rendition of fugitive slaves.

One of the resolutions submitted by him declared the non-existence of slavery in the recently-acquired Territories, and, therefore, the inexpediency of Congress providing by law either for its introduction into or its exclusion from any part of said Territory.

In reference to this resolution, Mr. Davis, of Mississippi, declared that it was no compromise, as it gave nothing to the South. He at the same time announced, and wished what he said to go forth to the country, that he never would take less than the Missouri Compromise line extended to the Pacific Ocean, with the specific recognition of the right to hold slaves in the territory below that line; and that before such Territories are admitted into the Union as States slaves may be taken there from any of the United States at the option of the owners.

This was an explicit announcement of the position of Southern extremists on this important subject of controversy.

Mr. Clay promptly met this declaration by another quite as explicit, manly, and decisive. He said, "I am extremely sorry to hear the Senator from Mississippi say that he requires, first, the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, and also that he is not satisfied with that, but requires, if I understand him correctly, a positive provision for the admission of slavery south of that line. And now, sir, coming from a slave State, as I do, *I owe it to myself, I owe it to truth, I owe it to the subject, to say that no earthly power could induce me to vote for a specific measure for the introduction of slavery where it had not before existed, either north or south of that line. Coming as I do from a slave State, it is my solemn, deliberate, and well-matured determination that no power,* NO EARTHLY POWER, *shall compel me to vote for the positive introduction of slavery either south or north of that line.* Sir, while you reproach, AND JUSTLY TOO, our British ancestors for the introduction of this institution upon the continent of America, *I am for one unwilling that the posterity of the present inhabitants of California and New Mexico shall reproach us for doing just what we reproach Great Britain for doing to us.*"

It will be seen from this declaration that he did not differ with the administration as to the propriety of admitting California as a free State, nor as to New Mexico and Utah being given Territorial governments. But the difference was in this: the administration proposed to have these several subjects disposed of separately and apart from all others; whereas Mr. Clay chose to combine them all into one bill, and enact that as a compromise or adjustment of all the differences between the two sections. He had two subjects in his plan of adjustment with which the administration did not propose to meddle: namely, the rendition of fugitive slaves, and the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia.

The committee of thirteen consisted of Mr. Clay, chairman, and Senators Cass, Webster, Dickinson, Bright, Phelps, Cooper, King, Mason, Downes, Mangum, Bell, and Berrien,—six from free States and seven from slave States,—seven Whigs and six Democrats. The three Northern Whigs upon the committee belonged to the anti-Free-soil wing of the party: such Sena-

tors as John Davis, Roger S. Baldwin, Truman Smith, William H. Seward, William L. Dayton, and Thomas Corwin, who more truly represented the Northern sentiment, were passed over. King, Mason, Downes, and Berrien were Southern extremists, and Bright, though a Northern man, sympathized with the South.

The select committee, by their chairman, in due time reported a single bill, in which all the different measures mentioned were combined. It was called "Mr. Clay's Omnibus Compromise bill," and, as a considerable portion of the Senate were opposed to these measures,—some to one portion and some to another, some for one reason and some for another,—it became the great absorbing topic of discussion, not only in the Senate but in the public press, and by the people of the whole country, for many months. It was the occasion of a forensic conflict and display such as has not been witnessed in the Senate since, and such as rarely occurs in any deliberative body in the world. There were men then in that body eminent for their public services, their legal attainments, their sound scholarship, and their forensic powers; and on this great subject all these delivered their views, and sustained each his respective opinions. Here were Webster, Calhoun, Benton, Cass, Davis (of Massachusetts), Ewing, Corwin,* Chase, Seward, Mangum, Berrien, Pearce, Dawson, Dayton, Bell, and Soulé. Others might be named, all men of acknowledged abilities. But *primus inter pares* stood the acknowledged leader, Henry Clay.

It would, probably, have been considered savoring of arrogance had any other Senator assumed the office of mediator and pacificator between the North and the South, but no such feeling was manifested in regard to him; on the contrary, it was considered peculiarly proper and patriotic in him, and the nation applauded him for what he had undertaken. No other man in Congress was so situated that he could act the part Mr. Clay had undertaken, as all others of sufficient public reputa-

* On the accession of Mr. Fillmore to the office of President, after General Taylor's death, Mr. Corwin became Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Ewing was appointed, by the Governor of Ohio, to take his place in the United States Senate.

tion were more or less identified with the section to which they belonged,—Mr. Webster with the North, Mr. Calhoun with the South, etc. Mr. Clay had always been pre-eminently *national*. He was now, moreover, no longer the leader of a party, or an aspirant for Presidential honors; indeed, he could hardly now be said to belong to any party.

THE DEBATE.

Mr. Clay introduced his resolutions on the 29th of January, and the bill afterwards reported was under consideration in the Senate for seven months, most of the time the subject of debate,—sustained and opposed with great power, vigor, fervor, and eloquence. Taking the lead in and managing the discussion, occasionally delivering a long, elaborate, and exhaustive argument, sometimes bursting out into impassioned eloquence, and replying frequently to the arguments of opponents, and thus keeping up a running and almost daily discussion, the labor performed by Mr. Clay in these seven months was truly herculean. Others could intermit their labor and attention, be absent and take recreation, or attend to other matters: not so Mr. Clay; while the subject was under consideration and debate was going on, and especially if any Senator were speaking against the adjustment measures, he was all attention, and not an argument escaped him, as it was to be replied to either by himself or some one whom he might request to perform this service. On several occasions he spoke from two to four hours, and frequently from half an hour to an hour. This was a mental and physical labor which few men twenty years younger could endure, and it probably shortened his life several years. Old as he was,—seventy-three,—he spoke with all the eloquence and power he exhibited in his palmy days. That he could speak and steadily pour out torrents of argument and illustration for a whole day,—on his feet four or five hours,—was indeed wonderful.

Among the most prominent opponents of Mr. Clay's adjustment plan was Mr. Benton, whose hostility was intense. He assailed it again and again, with argument, ridicule, contempt, and every species of weapon he could bring to bear upon it. Some scenes more exciting than creditable occurred between

them; but the most amusing and ridiculous occurrence in which Mr. Benton acted a part in this debate was a disturbance between him and Mr. Foote.

Mr. Benton had, some days previous, severely handled the address of the Southern members of Congress, the production of Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Foote, while speaking in defense of this, made some sarcastic and provoking remarks, evidently in allusion to Mr. Benton, and applied them to him by frequently turning and looking towards him.

Mr. Benton at length rose, greatly excited, and, throwing his chair from him with such violence as to attract attention, stepped into the passage outside of the bar of the Senate, and advanced hastily to the passage, or aisle, leading to Mr. Foote's desk, where he was standing. The two Senators Dodge, of Wisconsin and Iowa, father and son, endeavored to arrest his progress, but he broke from them, exclaiming, "Stand out of the way! I have no pistols. Stand out of the way! let me pass! —let the assassin fire!" advancing towards Mr. Foote in great anger. There was much confusion, the Vice-President vainly endeavoring to preserve order. Mr. Foote had retreated to the desk of the Secretary, and drawn and cocked a pistol, which he held menacingly. Several Senators gathered around him, while others impeded Mr. Benton's farther advance, and took him back to his seat, he continually exclaiming, in a heated manner, "Let the assassin fire! I have no pistols;" "I scorn to go armed;" "Only cowards go armed."

Mr. Dickinson, of New York, took the pistol from Mr. Foote and locked it in his desk; and order was at length restored.

Mr. Dickinson, with a view to turn the minds of Senators to other matters, inquired of the Vice-President what the question was before the Senate.

Mr. Benton, in a boisterous tone.—"This is not going to pass off in this way. I demand of the Senate to take immediate action. A pistol has been drawn, sir. It has been pointed at me, sir. I demand the immediate action of this body, sir."

Mr. Mangum submitted a resolution appointing a committee of seven to investigate the matter; and here the affair virtually ended.

Of this long-protracted and very interesting debate,—lasting for seven months,—which would fill many large volumes, it is impossible, and would be unprofitable, to give even the briefest abstract or synopsis: the times and the events which called it forth, as well as nearly all who partook in it, have passed away, and with them the interest felt in the questions which, at the time, agitated the country. Mr. Clay's professed, and doubtless sincere, desire was to restore harmony to the country by an equitable adjustment of these irritating questions, and he had full faith in the accomplishment of this purpose by the adoption, by Congress, of his plan. But events proved that there was "an irrepressible conflict" between the North and the South, which could not be reconciled by compromises or protocols: there could be no harmony between freedom and slavery. The culmination of this "conflict" might perhaps have been postponed for a time by the Compromise; but come it must, and come it did, ten years later, when Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Benton slept quietly in their graves, undisturbed by the roar of fratricidal cannon.

It was in the debate upon the Compromise measures that Mr. Webster made his celebrated 7th of March speech, which gave offense to a considerable portion of the people of Massachusetts and alienated from him many of his old friends. In this speech he indulged in quite an unlooked-for strain of censure of the course the Free-soilers had pursued in regard to sectional questions, and especially in regard to the annexation of Texas,—clamorously agitating against it, yet bringing it about by refusing to support Mr. Clay, thus electing Mr. Polk. He spoke also slightingly, almost sneeringly, of "the Wilmot," as he called the Proviso. These criticisms were never forgiven. He was charged with attempting to win the favor of the South by that speech: if that were his purpose, he utterly failed to accomplish it, as was demonstrated two years after, at the Baltimore Whig National Convention, when the South refused to respond to the appeals of his friends to support his nomination for President. No doubt he looked for support from the South on that occasion, and felt bitterly the disappointment.

MR. CALHOUN'S LAST SPEECH.

Mr. Calhoun's health had been failing for a year or more, and, though he continued to appear in his seat in the Senate at intervals, he was so emaciated, pale, and cadaverous that he looked more like a fugitive from a grave than a living being. Yet his eye lost not its brilliancy, and his mind seemed as clear and powerful as ever. Feeble as he was, he would sit upright in his chair, only resting on its arms, but never leaning upon his desk or reposing on a sofa.

On the 4th of March, 1850, after having been absent from the Senate many weeks, he appeared, entering the chamber supported on the one side by his colleague, Mr. Butler, and on the other by Senator Mason, of Virginia, who escorted him to his seat. Here he was kindly greeted by the Senators generally. It had been understood that the delivery of Mr. Calhoun's speech would occupy the day.

After resting a short time, with the aid of others he rose, and addressed the Senators, stating, in feeble tones, that he had prepared and had printed the remarks he intended then to offer, but, as he felt himself too feeble to perform the task of delivering them, he asked the favor of them to allow his friend Senator Mason to read them. The request was, of course, granted.

As a whole, the speech was but a recapitulation of what had been uttered at the South, and especially in South Carolina, for years back, and was then the current language of Southern Hotspurs: charges of aggression by the general government and the North on the rights of the South, and the alternative presented to the latter, unless something decisive was immediately done to stop agitation, of secession by the South. He declared that nearly every cord that held the Union together had already been snapped. "The strongest cord of a political character," he said, "consists of the many and strong ties that have held together the two great parties. This," he said, "had resisted for a long time the explosive tendency of the agitation, but has finally snapped under its force,—if not entirely, in a great measure. If the agitation goes on, the

same force, acting with increased intensity, will finally snap every cord, when nothing will be left to hold the States together except force."

But California,—the admission of California into the Union as a free State—excluding the property of Southern men, as they chose to express themselves,—this was now the irritating matter which inflamed the Southern mind and called forth such fiery threats of disunion and secession.

The people of California, as I have stated, urged by Mr. Thomas Butler King, the agent of the administration, had called a convention, adopted a constitution, and transmitted it to the President, who had laid it before Congress with his special message. That constitution excluded slavery, or rather it was already excluded; consequently the Southern emigrant could not take his slaves with him and hold them in bondage there. But Congress had not yet admitted California. Alluding to this state of things, Mr. Calhoun said,—

"The Executive has laid the paper purporting to be the Constitution of California before you, and asks you to admit her into the Union as a State. Will you, or will you not, admit her? It is a grave question." Mr. Calhoun then proceeded to sound alarms and throw out warnings such as had long been familiar to the ears of Senators.

To the question asked by himself, "How can the Union be saved?" he gave answer, "By providing for the insertion of a provision in the Constitution, by an amendment, which will restore to the South in substance the power she possessed of protecting herself before the equilibrium between the sections was destroyed by the action of this government."

This is a very shadowy proposition, as vague as language could well make it. What it meant no one could fully understand, until it was authentically explained, some time after, to mean "the election of two Presidents,—one from the free States and the other from the slave States, each clothed with a positive veto,—no act of Congress to become a law until approved of both."

The reading of this speech by Mr. Mason—the Senate-chamber and galleries filled to overflowing,—the appearance of

Mr. Calhoun, standing, as all knew he did, upon the brink of the grave, wrapped in a cloak, his long, white, bushy hair hanging wildly down the sides of his pale, emaciated face, his countenance lighting up and his eye flashing out of its deep socket as he cast it around on Senators when certain passages were read, as if to arrest their attention and enforce his words with its wonted fire—was a most unique, impressive, and dramatic scene. He was, by the voice of a friend, uttering his last and most emphatic words in that illustrious body of which he had long been one of the most distinguished members. It was his last appearance in the Senate; of this he and all others were conscious. As he left his seat, supported by his venerable colleague, Judge Butler, and by Mr. Mason, the Senators gathered around him to express their sympathies and bid him an affectionate and eternal adieu. Supported by his two friends, he then passed slowly out. Impressive as were his last words, his own appearance was incomparably more so.

It was clear that he labored under extraordinary hallucinations. In the last years of his life his whole soul was absorbed in the preservation and perpetuation of slavery, to accomplish which he was ready to sacrifice the Union itself, and even looked upon this as anything but a blessing to the South. The SOUTH,—this, and this only, was *his* country; the North was foreign, ungenial soil to him.

MR. CALHOUN'S DEATH.

Mr. Calhoun died on the 31st of March, 1850, at his boarding-house,—Mr. Hill's, in what was called "the Old Capitol," used as a prison during the Rebellion, and since turned into three large, elegant dwelling-houses.

His death was announced in the Senate the next day, by his late colleague, Mr. Butler; on which occasion Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster addressed some touching and eloquent remarks to the Senate, which I am obliged to omit.

The triumvirate of American statesmen of the generation following Mr. Randolph, Mr. Pinckney, Mr. Otis, Mr. Quincy, Mr. Monroe, Mr. J. Q. Adams, Mr. William H. Crawford, and all those of middle age previous to the War of 1812,—Clay,

Webster, and Calhoun,—were once more brought together, as members of the Senate, from the commencement of the first session of the Thirty-first Congress, until the death of the latter. And now the melancholy duty fell upon two of them to pay due honor to the third, and speak of him dead as they had for nearly forty years known him living. All political feelings and rivalries vanish at such a sad moment, and only the emotions of the man, called forth by an event which is a solemn admonition, find utterance from the hearts of the survivors. They had entered Congress almost simultaneously; had each, from the first, been distinguished for eloquence and ability; had become veteran statesmen; had each aspired to the highest station attainable by any one in the country; two of them had been disappointed and given up all hope, while the third, still an aspirant, was soon destined to experience the same disappointment; and the two survivors were to follow their early companion in a little over two years.

DEFEAT OF THE COMPROMISE BILL.

The Compromise bill, as a whole,—a complex measure,—was defeated by amendments, on the 1st of August. How this occurred it is not necessary to state minutely. But there was a clashing of opinions and interests in regard to the claims of Texas to all that portion of New Mexico lying east of the Rio Grande up to, and including, Santa Fé. Upon this rock the bill went to pieces. Texas was already preparing to maintain her claim by force,—raising troops to take possession of the country. The friends of the bill disagreed on this subject, and the result was its defeat.

Mr. Clay exerted all his powers to prevent this,—to induce gentlemen to agree to some amendment which, if not entirely satisfactory to all, or to neither, would enable them to complete the structure they had, after so many months of hard toil, nearly completed. Light was dawning on them, he said, after groping so long in darkness, and would gentlemen for a slight difference in opinion undo all they had so nobly done, and leave the country to the mercy of agitators, North and South? He begged and pleaded that they would agree upon some-

thing,—some compromise or adjustment of this particular matter of difference. But his appeals were vain, and the structure fell, unfinished.

Mr. Clay, much moved, then rose, and said, "Mr. President, I wish to say only a word. We have presented to the country a measure of peace, a measure of tranquillity,—one which would have harmonized, in my opinion, all the discordant feelings which prevail. That measure, sir, has met with a fate not altogether unexpected, I admit, on my part, but one which, as it respects the country at large, I deplore exceedingly. For myself, personally, I have no cause to complain. The majority of the committee to which I belonged have done their duty, their whole duty, faithfully and perseveringly. If the measure has been defeated, it has been defeated by the extremists on both sides of this chamber.

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"Now, Mr. President, I stand here in my place meaning to be unawed by any threats, whether they come from individuals or States. I should deplore, as much as any man ever did or can do, that arms should be raised against the general authority of the Union, either by individuals or a State. But, after all that has occurred, if any one State, or portion of a State, shall choose to place itself in military array against the government of the Union, I am for trying the strength of the government of the Union. I am for ascertaining whether we have a government or not,—practically efficient, capable of maintaining its authority and of upholding the powers and interests which belong to a government. Nor, sir, am I to be alarmed or dissuaded by any such cause as the intimations of spilling of blood. If blood is to be spilled, by whose fault is it to be done? By those, sir, who have endeavored to raise the standard of disunion and attempt to prostrate this government. And, sir, when that is done, so long as it pleases God to give me a voice to express my sentiments, or an arm to raise, weak and feeble though it be, that voice and that arm shall be on the side of the country, in the support of the authority and maintenance of the powers of the general government."

The galleries here broke out in loud applause, carried away

as they were by Mr. Clay's patriotic fervor. The Vice-President requested him to suspend his remarks, and rebuked the galleries.

Mr. Walker, of Wisconsin, rose, and said, "I cannot, Mr. President, forbear thanking the venerable and eloquent Senator for giving utterance to these patriotic remarks."

Mr. Clay's remarks were called forth not only by the existence of the "irrepressible conflict," but also and especially by the fact that a Southern convention had been held at Nashville and put forth a series of threatening resolutions, embodying what had already been said in Congress; and by the fact that Governor Townes, of Georgia, had issued a proclamation calling a meeting of the State Legislature to take the necessary steps to resist their oppressors, and to maintain their rights to carry their *property* (slaves) with them into the Territories of the United States, "the common property of all." The admission of California without recognizing this right of the South he stigmatized as a gross insult to them, and the Legislature was called upon to maintain the rights, the honor, and the dignity of the State, thus trampled upon.

It was these demonstrations and threats which stirred Mr. Clay's patriotic ire and caused him to hurl defiance back upon them and all others who would rend the Union in twain. Whatever else he might be, he was pre-eminently an ardent, devoted, unswerving patriot. He was for the country,—the *whole* country, sound and intact, "one and indivisible;" not for any one portion of it, large or small; his patriotism embraced the whole ocean-bound land which constituted the *United* States,—in a word, the UNION.

Worn out and exhausted by long months of ceaseless labor, doomed to see the desired fruits of that labor all but within his grasp and then apparently lost, he gave up the work, and sought the repose his health and exhaustion demanded, expressing his earnest hopes that the several measures which had been combined in one bill and had come so near passing might be adopted by Congress separately.

PASSAGE OF THE SEVERAL BILLS CONSTITUTING THE ADJUSTMENT MEASURES.

Mr. Pearce, of Maryland, to whom Mr. Clay imputed the defeat of the Omnibus bill, now took the lead in the Senate in bringing forward in separate bills, each in relation to a single subject, the measures which had been combined in that bill for the action of the Senate. The first was a bill for the settlement of the boundaries of Texas, which passed the Senate on the 9th of August. As a separate measure this could be carried in the shape Mr. Pearce desired to put it in the Omnibus bill, though it failed as one of the parts of that bill; for the reason that Senators could vote for it as a separate measure who could not vote for the fugitive slave provision in the same bill.

In like manner a bill for the admission of California as a State passed the Senate on the 13th of August, by a vote of 33 to 16.

On the 15th a bill providing for a Territorial government for New Mexico passed the Senate; on the 23d the Fugitive Slave bill also passed, and shortly after, the bill to prohibit the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia. Thus each of the several measures provided for and combined in the Omnibus bill had now passed the Senate in separate and single bills.

These measures met with determined opposition in the House, especially the Fugitive Slave bill from Northern, and the California bill from Southern, members. But they were all carried. The bill relating to the boundaries of Texas, and that for establishing a Territorial government in New Mexico, were combined, and became a law on the 9th of September, as did the bill for the admission of California as a State into the Union. The Fugitive Slave bill became a law on the 18th, and the bill to suppress the slave-trade in the District of Columbia on the 20th of September.

DEATH OF GENERAL TAYLOR.

On the 4th of July, 1850, General Taylor attended the delivery of an oration at the Washington Monument, and after-

wards witnessed the depositing in the monument of dust from the tomb of Kosciusko, supposed to be that which had once been a part of the body of the celebrated Polish patriot. In attending this ceremony, which lasted an hour or two, he was exposed to the burning rays of a July sun, without the protection even of an umbrella. Much exhausted and overheated, he returned to the Executive mansion and imprudently indulged in large draughts of ice-water, at the same time eating unripe fruit, against which his servant vainly cautioned him. The result of this imprudence was an attack of disease which almost immediately became serious and alarming, creating great anxiety in the city and throughout the whole country, evincing the deep and affectionate respect he had won of the people by his military prowess, his modest and unassuming bearing, his sound and excellent common sense, his desire to allay party asperities and adopt measures to restore quiet to the country and promote its prosperity. No one could—no one did—doubt his stern honesty and integrity, or his patriotic desire and efforts to do that which was best for the country, irrespective of party feelings, especially in the establishment of Territorial governments over the newly-acquired Territories of California, New Mexico, and Utah. His death took place on the 9th of July.

The country was shocked by this sudden demise of another President in the midst of life, health, and usefulness, and deeply mourned his loss, justly believing him to be an honest, upright man, an able soldier, and a pure patriot, who made up in good, sound, practical common sense what he lacked of experience in civil affairs.

It seemed singular that the only two Whig Presidents whom the people had elected should both be cut off by death in the early part of their respective terms. But there was consolation to the party in power that there was no second John Tyler to succeed to the Executive chair and betray those by whom he had been elected.

Mr. Fillmore, the Vice-President, now to become President, enjoyed the fullest confidence of the whole Whig party.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Fillmore takes the Oath of Office and enters upon the Duties of President.—His Cabinet.—The Free-soil Party increases at the North and coalesces with the Democrats.—Salmon P. Chase elected Senator from Ohio.—Mr. Boutwell Governor, and Charles Sumner United States Senator, in Massachusetts.—More Disunionism in South Carolina.—The Second Session of the Thirty-first Congress.—President's Message.—Increasing Opposition at the North to the Fugitive Slave Law and its Execution.—A Calm Session of Congress.—Filibustering Expedition of Lopez against Cuba.—Kossuth.—Fêted in New York.—Disgraceful Doings there.—Judge Duer not allowed to reply to Kossuth.—Publicly received by both Houses of Congress.—The leading Public Men at Washington celebrate the Birthday of Washington.—Mr. Crittenden selected to address them on the Occasion, in Rebuke of the Assumptions of Kossuth adverse to the Principles of Washington.—Mr. Clay's Ill Health.—Great Union Movement in New York.—Whig National Convention, held at Baltimore, on the Fifty-third Ballot nominates General Scott for President, and William A. Graham for Vice-President.—The Democratic National Convention nominates Franklin Pierce for President, and William R. King for Vice-President.—Free-soil National Convention, held at Pittsburg, nominates John P. Hale for President, and George W. Julian for Vice-President.—Death of Mr. Clay.—Presidential Canvass of 1852.—Mr. Webster's Death.—General Pierce elected President.—Brutal Assault of Preston S. Brooks, of South Carolina, on Mr. Sumner.—Close of Fillmore's Administration.

JULY, 1850.—MR. FILLMORE ASSUMES THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT.

On the death of General Taylor, the several heads of Department who constituted his cabinet addressed a joint letter to Mr. Fillmore, Vice-President, officially informing him of the death of the President, and on the morning of the next day he communicated the intelligence to both Houses of Congress, at the same time notifying them that he should on that day, at twelve o'clock, take the oath of office in presence of the Senate and House of Representatives.

At the designated time, the two Houses assembled in the Representative hall. The venerable Chief-Justice Cranch was conducted into the hall by a member of Congress, and imme-

diately after Mr. Fillmore entered, supported by the Honorable Pierre Soulé, Senator from Louisiana, and the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, Representative from Massachusetts, and late Speaker of the House. With the President, Mr. Fillmore, the late cabinet of General Taylor also entered and took seats on the platform. The oath of office was then administered by Judge Cranch. As Mr. Fillmore made no address on the occasion, the administering of the oath concluded the ceremonies, and he then retired, accompanied by the committee of arrangements and the members of the late cabinet.

Seldom has the chief officer of a great nation been inaugurated into office in a less ostentatious manner,—no procession, no martial music, no military uniforms, no speeches. He took the oath of office in the presence of the two Houses of Congress, and that was all. All the members of the cabinet tendered their resignations, but they were requested to withhold them for a short time, until the President could find successors.

Called suddenly and unexpectedly to assume the duties of President, Mr. Fillmore had a perplexing task to perform in finding the proper men from different sections of the country to fill the highest offices under him,—men who not only possessed the necessary abilities to conduct the departments of the government, but who had also sufficient character and experience in public affairs, and who would harmonize with him and with one another. This required time,—some weeks at least. But the members of the late cabinet were unwilling to remain. Two or three did so, reluctantly, until the 22d of July: the others left the city almost immediately. For some reason which I could never divine, there had been exhibited on the part of General Taylor's cabinet a very unfriendly disposition towards the Vice-President. No favor he had asked had been granted. He had recommended two gentlemen for collector of customs and postmaster, at Buffalo, where he resided: neither was appointed, but in their stead men politically inimical to him; Whigs, but Seward, anti-Fillmore Whigs. There was cause, therefore, for these gentlemen not wishing to remain and perform the duties of their respective departments under such circumstances. Mr. Clayton, Secretary of State, left immedi-

ately, transacting no business whatever with Mr. Fillmore, and Mr. Webster was at once appointed in his place. The position was tendered to him at the instance and upon the urgent advice of Mr. Clay, sustained by Mr. Mangum. It was understood that Mr. Fillmore had intended to offer it to Mr. Winthrop; but Mr. Clay urged that it ought to be in charge of a statesman not only of acknowledged competence and experience, but also of more than national reputation,—one in whom European statesmen would have confidence,—who would give character to the administration. To these suggestions Mr. Fillmore finally yielded.*

Mr. Corwin was nominated Secretary of the Treasury; Mr. McKennan, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Interior; Edward Bates, of Missouri, Secretary of War; William A. Graham, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; Nathan K. Hall, of Buffalo, New York, Postmaster-General; and John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, Attorney-General.

The Interior Department was first offered to James A. Pearce (Senator), of Maryland, who declined it. Mr. McKennan accepted the office, came to Washington, entered upon its duties, discharged them for about two weeks, and resigned, on account of ill health. It was then tendered to and accepted by A. H. H. Stuart, of Virginia. Mr. Bates declined the office of Secretary of War, and Charles M. Conrad was appointed; and thus, at last, the cabinet was made up. As a whole, able as the late cabinet was, this was in no respect inferior.

The first session of this Congress continued until the last of September,—an unusually long, arduous, and exciting one. The passage of the several bills heretofore mentioned had a tranquillizing effect upon the country, except that the Fugitive Slave Act met with determined hostility and resistance at the North, where several futile attempts, and some successful ones, were made to capture fugitive slaves under it, creating much disturbance in some communities, and raising great clamor against it. The people of the North loved liberty too well to

* I state this upon the authority of Judge Mangum, who, immediately after the matter was settled, called upon Mr. Webster and informed him of the fact, and of the advice of Mr. Clay.

give any one aid in reducing or returning another human being to bondage. The question arose at once in the mind of every thinking man, "Why should one man own, or have a right to the person of, another, and compel him to obey and labor for him all his life?"

The reply was, Because the laws of the Southern States so declare, and the Constitution of the United States, although the word *slave* is not in it, does, in fact, recognize slavery. But, rejoined the Northern man, slavery is wrong, inhuman, and contrary to the natural rights of man; and, being so, I will not aid in enforcing such a law,—a law so revolting to my sense of justice. If the Southern planter has a right, by law, to seize and carry away his slave, let him come here and do it if he can: I will not be his slave-catcher. But when the planter or his agent came, the fugitive, in most cases, had disappeared, —gone to Canada by "the underground railroad," as it was usually expressed,—and so the master or his agent returned to complain of the non-execution and inefficiency of the law.

The extremists of the South were still as clamorous for disunion as they ever had been, South Carolina leading. On the passage, by the Senate, of the bill to admit California without running the Missouri Compromise line through that Territory, a number of Southern Senators drew up, signed, and asked to have entered on the journal, a protest against the bill. This was rejected as not allowable; but the passage of the bill was made the occasion of fresh complaints against the "aggressions" of the North, and a pretense for the cry of resistance and disunion. The Nashville Convention reassembled, and though the number of delegates had fallen off, and the intensity of the feeling manifested some months previous had greatly abated, yet it issued some incendiary resolutions, and recommended the holding of another convention in Mississippi, to consider what course the South should take to protect her rights.

THE FREE-SOIL PARTY INCREASES AT THE NORTH.—COALESCES WITH THE DEMOCRATS.

The effect of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, and its attempted execution at the North, was to increase greatly the

Free-soil party at the expense of the Whig party. Democrats became Free-soilers as well as the Whigs, but they did not, except in a few instances, abandon their party organization on that account, as did the Whigs.

In Ohio the Democrats and Free-soilers united in the State Legislature, and elected Salmon P. Chase, a Democrat and Free-soiler, United States Senator. In Massachusetts the two parties coalesced in 1850, and elected Mr. Boutwell, Democrat, Governor of the State, Robert Rantoul, Democratic Free-soiler, and Charles Sumner, Whig Free-soiler, United States Senators, the former for the short term,—remainder of Mr. Webster's,—the latter for six years. Other elections of a similar character, but of less importance, took place, Democrats and Free-soilers dividing the honors among themselves. By these movements the strength and compactness of the Whig party were much impaired, and from this time it may date its disintegration,—a disintegration out of which arose the present Republican party. Slavery broke the old Whig party, and in a few years after shattered the old Democratic party, though the latter has fought perseveringly to avoid annihilation. The bitter denunciations of the Whigs by the Free-soil party, and its warm embrace of the Democrats, manifesting at the same time the most irreconcilable hostility to the Fugitive Slave Act, for which twenty-seven Northern Democrats, and but three Northern Whigs, voted in Congress, constituted one of those rare manifestations in political warfare which exhibit the perfect honesty and purity of purpose of coalescing extremes. The Whig party was declared to be a pro-slavery party, in the face of the vote just stated, and Mr. Webster, Mr. Fillmore, and the Whig administration were charged with being the authors and supporters of the odious Fugitive Slave Act. Such was the odium pertaining to that act, so hatefully was it viewed by the Free-soilers, that at a large meeting held by them at Faneuil Hall, Boston, a resolution was adopted that no fugitive slave should be surrendered in Massachusetts.

But, though the feeling of the whole North was strongly repugnant to this act, the greater portion sacrificed their feelings to their sense of duty. However unpalatable, it was the

law of the land, and must be enforced, or, at least, not resisted. It was justly argued that if the North might resist this act the South might with equal reason disregard the act abolishing the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia.

MEETING OF CONGRESS.

Members of the Thirty-first Congress came together at their second session, after having had an opportunity to mingle with their constituents and ascertain the feelings of the people in regard to the passage of the so-called adjustment or compromise bills; and it was a marked circumstance that, upon reassembling, there was a decidedly better feeling among them than when they separated two months before, most of those who had been violently arrayed against one another one year ago becoming now very good friends. The President's message was not only satisfactory to all save the few extremists, but was highly acceptable, and called forth unqualified praise from members and the public press. The public voice pronounced it a model message. It was unpretentious, plain, clear, brief, and business-like, the language pure idiomatic English, in striking contrast, in these respects, to some of the inflated messages of his predecessors, and also in regard to the avoidance of theories and speculations touching political dogmas and matters not likely to come before Congress for action. Mr. Fillmore happily knew when he had said all he needed to say.

No one ever supposed that had the Fugitive Slave Act been passed before the death of General Taylor he would have refused his signature to it; but the signing of it by Mr. Fillmore brought down upon him the bitterest fulminations. Had he withheld his signature, and returned the bill to the Senate, where it originated, no one who knows anything of the state of the public mind at that time, and especially of the feeling of the South, ready to break out into open rebellion, and only prevented by the passage of these bills,—and this one especially,—can doubt that the country would have been immediately involved in a civil war.

At the North the agitating question was, Shall the Fugitive

Slave Act of Congress be enforced, or shall its execution be resisted? At the South it was, Shall we submit to the exclusion of our slaves from California, as they are excluded by the admission of that Territory as a State by Congress, with the constitution she has formed, or shall we secede from the Union? As a whole, however, the country enjoyed a large degree of contentment and tranquillity, abundant harvests, and general prosperity. People would be content and happy in spite of the restless spirits who desired to make them otherwise, and persisted in turning a deaf ear to croakers and prophets of evil.

A CALM SESSION OF CONGRESS.

Some one has wisely said, "Happy is that nation whose annals are uninteresting;" and happy was the nation now that excitement in Congress had almost entirely ceased, and members could give their undivided attention to proper subjects of legislation. Agitations upon the slavery question, however, still prevailed in some parts of the North and the South.

South Carolina, a perpetual threatening volcano, as usual, was bent upon breaking up the Union. She was urging the holding of a congress of slaveholding States for that avowed purpose, though she found the other Southern States indisposed to follow her lead. Mr. Cheves, in a State convention called by the Legislature to carry out this treasonable design, appealing to the whole South, exclaimed, "Unite! unite! and you shall form one of the most splendid empires on which the sun has ever shone; of the most homogeneous population, all of the same blood and lineage, a soil the most fruitful, and a climate the most lovely. But—submit! submit! The very sound curdles the blood in my veins. But oh, great God, unite us [in a Southern congress], and a tale of submission shall never be told."

If such invocations could come from one whose head had been whitened by the snows of threescore and ten winters,—winters which had failed to cool the fires in his breast,—what was to be expected from the young hot-bloods, such as Pickens, Rhett, Keitt, Colcock, Miles, and others?

Governor Floyd, of Virginia, gave expression to his feelings towards the North, in his message to the Legislature, in the following language:

"I earnestly recommend to your consideration the propriety of laying a tax upon all the products of the non-slaveholding States offered for sale within our territory. . . . Let a tax of ten per cent. be imposed upon such articles as are found to be manufactured or produced in the non-slaveholding States. . . . I would also recommend that such a tax be imposed upon foreign goods imported through non-slaveholding States as will offer effectual encouragement to direct importation into our own ports."

Most wise statesman! most sagacious political economist! Tax all articles manufactured in non-slaveholding States, brought into Virginia, when Virginia was dependent on them for every article she used,—clothing, furniture, hats, shoes, pots, kettles, brooms, combs, brushes, axes, shovels, hoes, knives and forks, spoons, plows, harrows, harness, carriages,—in short, everything; for which she paid in flour, wheat, corn, and tobacco.

Nevertheless, the South was comparatively tranquil.

At the North, large Union meetings were held in various cities and towns, New York, Philadelphia, Albany, etc.,—east and west of the Alleghanies,—in which the most prominent men of all parties took part, and passed resolutions indorsing the Compromise measures, pledging their exertions to enforce them, approving the President's message, and denouncing all agitation.

But the Fugitive Slave Law was still denounced by the Free-soilers, and its execution resisted by force. In Boston, a fugitive named Shadrach was arrested by the United States Marshal, under a warrant from the United States Commissioner, and was rescued by a mob of colored men, who entered the court-room and took him from the officers.

The affair produced great excitement, not only in Boston, but in other parts of the country, at the South especially. In the Senate a resolution was adopted calling upon the President for information in relation to this affair, to which the President

responded, giving all the facts and circumstances as communicated by the United States officers. In closing his message to the Senate, February 19, the President said,—

"I use this occasion to repeat the assurance that, so far as depends on me, the law shall be faithfully executed, and all forcible opposition to it suppressed; and to this end I am prepared to exercise, whenever it may become necessary, the power constitutionally vested in me to the fullest extent. . . . I doubt not that firmness, moderation, and freedom, strengthened and animated by the general opinion of the people, will prevent the repetition of occurrences disturbing the public peace and reprobated by all good men."

In a letter written in reply to an invitation to attend a Union meeting at Tarrytown, New York, Mr. Webster took a general view of the present condition of the country in regard to the absorbing subject of slavery agitation:

"I hope," he said, "the spirit of disunion may be considered now in some degree as checked; but that it has existed, both at the North and the South, and does still exist to a dangerous extent, cannot, it seems to me, be denied by any honest man.

"In the South, the separation of the States is openly proposed, discussed, and recommended, absolutely or conditionally, in legislative halls, and in conventions called together by authority of law.

"In the North, the State governments have not run into such excess, and the purpose of overturning the government shows itself more clearly in resolutions agreed to in voluntary assemblies of individuals, denouncing the laws of the land, and declaring a fixed intent to disobey them."

Mr. Webster pronounces this opposition and resistance to the laws of the country to be treason. He closes a long letter thus:

"For myself, I confess that if I were to witness the breaking up of the Union and the Constitution of the United States, I should bow myself to the earth in confusion of face. I should wish to hide myself from the observance of mankind unless I could stand up and declare truly, before God and man, that by the utmost exertion of my faculties with which my

Creator has endowed me, I had labored to avert the catastrophe."

But the second session of the Thirty-first Congress passed away quietly, without the usual heated debates, criminations and recriminations, and disreputable scenes. The press in all parts of the country noticed and commended this agreeable change, and was loud in applauding the administration for its firmness, moderation, prudence, and conciliatory course.

The Southern congress, which the disunionists of South Carolina had labored so fervently to get up for the purpose of forming a Southern Confederacy, came to naught. There were wise men and reasonable men at the South, and even in South Carolina, among them the able and venerable Poinsett, whose patriotic appeals to the people and bold denunciations of the designs of the disunionists were not without their proper effect upon the Southern mind,—at least upon the less inflammable portion of the people.

The most prominent feature of Mr. Fillmore's administration thus far was a resolute purpose to enforce the laws wherever attempts were made to set them at defiance, whether it were resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law at the North, or the organization of expeditions gotten up at the South to invade the territories of nations in amicable relations with our own.

This resolute purpose of the administration necessarily arrayed the Free-soil party at the North against it. This party was then comparatively weak, though rapidly increasing in strength.

Rumors of an expedition being about to be, or then being, organized in the United States and fitted out for the purpose of invading Cuba, instigated chiefly by Cubans and Spaniards, the President issued his proclamation, exhorting all good citizens to discountenance and prevent any such enterprise, and calling upon every officer of the government, civil or military, to use all efforts in his power to arrest, prosecute, and punish every such offender.

His decisive action in this matter elicited universal commendation. But this did not prevent the expedition from being fitted out and leaving the shores of the United States, under the command of one Lopez, whose name indicated his

nationality. With some two to four hundred men, he landed at Bahia Honda on the 12th of August, 1851. The expedition was an entire failure. It had been represented to the men that upon landing they would at once be joined by a large number of patriots, and that the people were ready for a revolt. So far from this, not a man joined them, and the people manifested their hostility to them in every way. They were, of course, defeated and taken prisoners,—a fate they well merited. Some were killed in a conflict with the Spanish troops, some executed, and some released upon the intervention of our government.

The fate of these marauders, filibusters, and robbers created much sensation at the South, where they had been recruited, and no little elsewhere. That the expedition was encouraged by Southern gentlemen, and even aided by funds contributed by them, the evidence was too strong to be questioned; it was acknowledged to me by a leading public man of the South.

KOSSUTH.

But the public eye, ear, and attention were, ere long, drawn in another direction. Congress having authorized the President to use any public vessel to bring Louis Kossuth, late Governor of Hungary, and his suite to this country, he was landed at New York, where his presence created a great furor. He was received and fêted by the city authorities, making a speech in which he condemned our traditional Washington policy of non-intervention in European affairs, and lectured able jurists present in regard to their construction of our Constitution, which, he assumed, they did not rightly understand. It was quite modest in a foreigner, just landed on our shores, to take upon himself a task of this kind; but he found an audience who manifested no indignation at his presumption, and who even silenced General Webb when he attempted to reply.

Shortly after this, the Bar of New York gave a dinner to Kossuth, whose speech on the occasion was an explicit demand for intervention to prevent intervention, with a frank avowal that such a demonstration might lead to war, and in that event we should be bound to accept war (with Russia), or

be degraded before mankind from our present high national standing.

Will it be believed that such sentiments could be loudly applauded by a respectable New York audience? He called upon the United States to declare that we would not permit any foreign power to interfere with the sovereign right of nations (Hungary, for instance) to dispose of their own domestic concerns; "that the United States consider themselves to have the duty not to permit any revolution of the laws of nations, and that they invite Great Britain to unite with them to safeguard and to guarantee these laws."

The venerable and able jurist Judge Duer, in response to a toast to the Bench, spoke in very complimentary terms of their guest, Kossuth, and especially of his noble frankness. He felt that the same frankness was due in return. Here he began to be interrupted. He ventured to say that, if he could not be heard, mischief had already been done, and Americans could not be listened to. He wished to say that the sentiments of their guest (cries of "Put that in the 'Courier and Enquirer!'") were regarded by many as the most deeply interesting of any that have been raised since the foundation of the government. They involved a sudden and violent departure from the settled policy of our government, established by its founders and cherished by the people.

The shouts and hisses and cheers and general tumult utterly drowned the voice of the judge, and he was, after several efforts to speak, compelled to give up the attempt to address the company. The scene was most disgraceful, most humiliating. Here was an arrogant foreigner, almost deified, undertaking to condemn our national policy of non-intervention, so wisely established by Washington and strictly adhered to by all his successors, audaciously insisting on a change of that policy by our government, not only eagerly listened to, but cheered to the very echo; and when a man venerable for age, learning, and wisdom attempts to reply, he is hissed and hooted and shouted into humiliating silence! And by whom? By the New York Bar, of which Judge Duer had been for half a century one of the brightest ornaments.

It seemed as if the people of the United States had run mad with Kossuth, and were ready to cast aside the maxims of wisdom handed down to us from our prudent forefathers, and accept in their stead the interested and arrogant teachings of one whose ideas of republicanism were as crude as might be expected from one who had all his life been accustomed to despotism, and who walked our streets with a steel-scabbarded sabre at his side, and a body-guard of half-civilized young men accompanying him!

Kossuth, and his suite of twenty-three persons, came to Washington; he was formally received by the President, who was prudent enough not to give the least countenance to his wild whims. He called on Mr. Clay, who, of course, received him in a manner due to the part he had played in Hungary, but who did not hesitate to express his strong disapproval of his (Kossuth's) strange propositions and hopes of intervention on our part.

He was publicly received by both Houses of Congress, and appeared before them in military costume,—it was his every-day wear,—with his sabre at his side, rattling on the stone floors of the rotunda and anterooms.

Kossuth and his suite, a dissipated set of young men, were quartered at the Indian Queen, now the Metropolitan, Hotel. The doors of his and their apartments were guarded by sentries with muskets, and a number of these had to be passed to reach Kossuth's room. They were but a little more civilized than Choctaws,—slept on the beds with their boots and spurs on, and showed by their use and abuse of the furniture that they had been, all their lives, accustomed only to a camp. Their rooms were filthy with dirt and tobacco.

I must confess, I was filled with mortification and disgust at seeing crowds, even of respectable people, eagerly running after this foreigner, patriot though he might be, conceited, haughty, and aristocratic as he was; and it was humiliating to read the severe comments of foreign papers when speaking almost in contemptuous terms of "the extraordinary manifestations and the public *adoration* shown by us to Kossuth, so little consistent with the dignity and sobriety which

should distinguish the Anglo-Saxon race and a genuine republic."

The leading public men at Washington felt it to be a duty incumbent on them to rebuke this assumption and arrogance of a foreigner in denouncing the policy of Washington, and for this purpose it was determined to celebrate with some *éclat* the birthday of Washington by a supper. Mr. Crittenden was selected to respond to a toast, and, in doing so, to spurn and rebuke this attempted interference in our affairs. His speech was worthy the occasion,—eloquent, spirited, patriotic. It was as much a rebuke to the New York Bar, who had so humbled and demeaned themselves by casting away all national pride, as it was to Kossuth. "Beware," said Mr. Crittenden, in the words of Washington, "of the introduction or exercise of a foreign influence among you. [Loud and prolonged cheers.] We are Americans: 'the Father of our Country' has taught us, and we have learned, to govern ourselves. If the rest of the world have not yet learned that lesson, how shall they teach us? Shall *they* undertake to expound to *us* the Farewell Address of our Washington, or to influence us to depart from the wise policy recommended by him? *We* are the teachers, and they have not or will not learn, and yet they come to teach us! [To this the assembly replied with hearty cheers.]

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"I hope I may be excused for saying that I feel that my country is safer while pursuing the policy of Washington than in making any new experiments in politics, upon any new exposition of Washington's legacy. [Which Kossuth had had the consummate arrogance to undertake at the meeting of the New York Bar.]

"I want to stand *super antiquas vias*,—upon the old road that Washington traveled, and that every President, from Washington to Fillmore, has traveled."

Mr. Crittenden took his seat amid prolonged cheering.

MR. CLAY.

On account of failing health, and in the hope of deriving benefit from a milder climate, Mr. Clay left Washington in the

spring of 1851, went to New York, and took passage from there to Havana. He remained at the latter place but a short time, —deriving little benefit from the climate,—and then proceeded home by way of New Orleans and the Mississippi. Though afflicted with a distressing cough, he came to Washington at the commencement of the first session of the Thirty-second Congress; but the fatigue of the journey so weakened him, and his cough so increased, that he was not able to take his seat. Previous to leaving Lexington, a letter was addressed to him by a committee appointed for that purpose by a very large meeting of the most prominent citizens of New York, convened for the purpose of expressing approval of and adherence to the Compromise acts, condemning the hostility and resistance to one of those acts at the North, and rebuking the disunion movements at the South. To this he replied in an elaborate communication, reviewing the condition of the country at the North and at the South, setting forth our perils, and our bright future if these could be overcome, and pointing out the duty of all good citizens who love their country and would promote her happiness and prosperity. The whole communication was redolent with a glowing patriotism, couched in earnest language, and seemed to come from a heart conscious that it would soon cease to throb. It was one of the ablest productions that ever emanated from the great orator, statesman, and patriot, whose strength was now fast waning and whose brilliant eye was becoming dim. It was as if he had roused himself to make a last solemn appeal to a country he loved so dearly. It was the last effort of the kind he made. He had done his duty; he had done all in his power; he had so impaired his health in his extraordinary labors in 1850, in originating and effecting the adoption of the adjustment measures, that he was now hastening to that narrow house from which there is no returning step, *nulla vestigia retrorsum.*

He was from his arrival here unable to leave his room, and consequently unable to return to his own dear Ashland and the bosom of his family; but sent for his son Thomas, who remained with him to the end.

IMPORTANT MOVEMENT IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.—THE UNION PARTY.

The great mass of the people at the North, that is, in the non-slaveholding States, had from the first warmly approved Mr. Clay's adjustment measures and advocated their enforcement, as a final settlement of the vexed controversy between the two sections of the country. Especially was this the case in the large cities and towns, among the thinking business-men and capitalists, who deprecated sectional conflicts and constant political agitation. In the city of New York a great movement was made by this class of citizens, irrespective of former party designations, the leading spirits of both the old parties uniting cordially in it.

A committee of one hundred of the most respected and influential citizens was constituted, designated as the Committee of Safety of New York, whose special duty it was to promote union and harmony and the enforcement of the laws,—the "Compromise" laws in particular. Those who thus acted took the name of, and were styled, "Union men," in contradistinction to the "Free-soilers," who were extremely hostile to the Compromise, and especially the Fugitive Slave Law. The motto of the Union men was, "THE UNION, THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS." It is needless to say that the "Union men" very decidedly approved of the measures of Mr. Fillmore's administration.

Some of the leading Union men, Democrats and Whigs, had conceived the plan of uniting the conservative portions of the two parties by forming a Presidential ticket to be supported by the new Union party at the Presidential election in 1852, then approaching. It was believed that patriotism was strong enough in the breasts of those who desired to see harmony once more restored to the country and sectionalism forever put down to induce them to abandon their old organizations, Whig and Democrat, and rally together to effect the great patriotic object. But in counting on the ready co-operation of the leading men of the two parties, and especially of those Democrats who were confidently hoping to be nominated and elected

President and Vice-President by their own party, and others who were in confident expectation of being the recipients of high official honors, the Union men were sadly deceived; and they had the mortification to find that these hopes exerted a far more powerful influence upon those who entertained them than any desire to banish sectionalism and restore peace and harmony to the country; and for the want of the co-operation of these political aspirants—who were in the end disappointed—the plan of uniting the "Union men" of the two parties, and casting away the old organizations as effete and unable to effect any good for the country, fell through.

But the question may be properly asked, suppose the plan had not failed, and the Union men of the two parties had formed a new Union party and elected their Presidential candidates,—say Mr. Clay, feeble as he was, and General Cass, who were spoken of,—could the new party have insured tranquillity to the country? It is not probable. The enforcement of the laws was the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, which was so obnoxious to the "Free-soilers," by no means to be despised, —either on account of numbers, perseverance, or energy,—that they were determined to resist its enforcement at all hazards; and they would have kept up the agitation despite every effort of any party to prevent it. The conflict was "irrepressible;" the crisis was to come, and come it did.

NOMINATIONS FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT.

The Democratic National Convention to nominate candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency was held at Baltimore on the 1st of June, 1852. There was a severe and protracted contest for the nomination, chiefly between Mr. Cass, Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Douglas, which ended by the nomination of Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire, for President, and Colonel William R. King, of Alabama, for Vice-President.

The Whig National Convention was soon after held, at the same place, and the struggle was here equally severe and protracted, resulting in the nomination, on the fifty-third ballot, of General Winfield Scott for President, and William A. Graham, of North Carolina, for Vice-President.

The two parties, as usual, put forth their platforms of principles, and from these should appear the issues of the contest. Setting aside generalities, in which the two parties mainly agreed, and which were mere "buncombe," we come to the second proposition of the Democratic platform, which declares that "The Constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements."

Opposed to this, the sixth proposition of the Whig platform declares that "The Constitution vests in Congress the power to open and repair harbors, and remove obstructions from navigable rivers; and it is expedient that Congress should exercise the power where the improvements are national and general in their character."

The Democratic convention declared that "The federal government should not foster one branch of industry to the detriment of any other."

The Whig, that "Revenue should be chiefly raised from duties on imports; and in levying these, sound policy requires a just discrimination and protection from fraud, by specific duties when practicable, whereby suitable encouragement may be assured to American industry, equally to all classes and to all parties."

The Democratic platform denounces in very severe terms "the efforts of the Abolitionists, and all others, to induce Congress to interfere with the question of slavery;" but says nothing of the adjustment measures.

The Whig platform says nothing of slavery, but forcibly urges the adoption of the Compromise acts as a final settlement, in principle and substance, and insists on their strict enforcement until time and experience shall demonstrate the necessity of further legislation to guard against the evasion of the laws on the one hand and the abuse of their powers on the other.

It will be seen that there was really very little difference in the declared principles of the two parties, except in regard to the protection of American industry and the powers of Congress to improve rivers and harbors; the latter more in theory than in practice, since every Congress, from time immemorial,

Democratic and Whig, had exercised this power. The real contest between them, as it has always been, was for the possession of the government.

The persons voted for by the Whig convention for President were General Scott, Mr. Fillmore, and Mr. Webster. Between the two first named the votes cast for each, from the first to the fifty-second ballot, were nearly equal, varying but little from first to last. On the first ballot the vote was, Scott, 134; Fillmore, 133; Webster, 29. The small vote of Mr. Webster was mortifying to him. Not a single vote from the South was cast for him. It was believed to be in his power at any time, by withdrawing and requesting his friends to support Mr. Fillmore, to have nominated the latter; yet he persistently refused to do this, or release his friends from their obligation to adhere to him, hopeless as it was that he could be nominated. There was something in this which had the appearance of ill-humored obstinacy,—an unfriendliness not very consistent with the official relations of himself and Mr. Fillmore.

At length, on the fifty-third ballot, and the fourth or fifth day's session, to bring the matter to a close, Mr. Hazlehurst, a friend of Mr. Fillmore, with twenty-seven others from Pennsylvania, voted for General Scott, and he was nominated. But at once a number of members of Congress from the South issued a card, declaring that they would not support the nominee, for reasons stated. The nomination of Mr. Fillmore, it was known, was the wish of Mr. Clay, as he had not only administered the government acceptably to the country, but was fully pledged to the sustainment of the Compromise measures. General Scott, on the other hand, was supported by that portion of the party who were opposed to those measures: not the Free-soilers as a party, but "free-soil Whigs," at the head of whom was Mr. Seward.

Mr. Webster was not only exceedingly mortified at the meagre vote cast for him in fifty-three ballotings, but he also now saw the Presidency, to which he had long aspired, pass forever beyond his reach. He, whose fame as a statesman, orator, patriot, and jurist was co-extensive with the civilized world; he, whose intellect commanded universal homage; he,

upon whom the office could confer no honor, and which would have been honored by his possession,—why should he be cast down, disappointed, unhappy, because it was not conferred upon him? Was it because there is an innate love of power in every human breast? "It is unpleasant," said Mr. Seward, as he was retiring from the office of Secretary of State,—"it is unpleasant to yield up power." The nation would have honored itself by placing Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster at its head as chief magistrate; but to do so would have added no honor to them, or one cubit to the stature of their fame or eminence. Not to do so has been a national reproach. More honorable is it to them that we are asked why they were *not*, than to others, why they *were*, clothed with the consular robes.

By his 7th of March speech, in support of the Compromise measures, which was lauded to the very echo at the South, Mr. Webster alienated hosts of friends at the North, and incurred their bitter hostility; but now, when the Southern men had an opportunity to prove the sincerity of their high professions of appreciation, not a man south of the Susquehanna cast a vote for him. This cut him to the soul.

A portion of the Mississippi delegation called and paid their respects to Mr. Webster on their return from Baltimore. General Starke, their spokesman, assured him of the unbounded admiration and respect cherished by the Whigs generally at the South for his exalted talents and eminent public services. He tendered the great champion of the measures of pacification, which had given peace and perpetuity to the Union, their warm, earnest, and sincere thanks for the powerful aid he rendered in establishing them as the settled policy of the country. He gave some reasons why they had not cast their votes for him, though the desire to do so was not wanting.

Mr. Webster thanked the delegation in a subdued and somewhat sad tone. He had no complaints to utter; regretted that it had been necessary to withhold their votes from him during the whole canvass. By the record it appeared that in all the numerous ballotings the Southern delegations had failed to cast a single vote for him. To this he must of course submit; it was not for him to complain.

It was sad to see the depressing effect which the action of the convention had on him. His disappointment could not be concealed; nor did he attempt to hide it. It was seen in his countenance, in his tone of voice, and in his demeanor; it was visible in the lessened interest he took in public affairs, and in his general depression of spirits. His personal friends lamented this; but what consolation could they offer?

Mr. Webster left Washington for his home at Marshfield not long after, and, though he was Secretary of State, did not, I believe, return to Washington again, and took no interest in the business of the Department.

Mr. William A. Graham, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy, being nominated as Vice-President, Mr. John P. Kennedy, of Maryland, succeeded him as Secretary of the Navy.

A FREE-SOIL CONVENTION HELD AT PITTSBURG.—NOMINATES CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENCY AND VICE-PRESIDENCY.

The Free-soilers also held a convention, at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in August, presided over by Henry Wilson, now Vice-President of the United States, which adopted a thorough free-speech, free-soil, free-men platform, and nominated John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, for President, and George W. Julian, of Indiana, for Vice-President.

This was then the rising party, and soon became the Republican party, which has held possession of the government since the 4th of March, 1861. The Free-soilers were then earnest, sincere workers; strong in the faith they professed, outspoken in declaring that faith, and confident of eventual success, they labored and spoke with a zeal that indicated their conviction that their day of triumph was not distant.

DEATH OF MR. CLAY.

"A noble heart ceased to beat forever, a long life of brilliant and self-devoted public service was closed," on the 29th day of June, 1852. On that day, a few minutes past eleven o'clock A.M., all that was mortal of Henry Clay ceased to exist. His death was feelingly announced next day in both Houses of Congress, and eloquent eulogies were pronounced upon him by

several of his old associates, and by younger men who, whether political friends or opponents, had learned to admire his genius, to appreciate his long public services, and to reverence his patriotic devotion to the interests and glory of his country.

Though not unlooked for, the death of Mr. Clay cast a gloom over the city and Congress. The funeral solemnities took place the second day after his death. The remains were placed in the rotunda of the Capitol for some hours, and were viewed by thousands. They were then sent to Ashland, his own beloved home, in charge of a committee appointed for that duty, where they now repose.

The body was taken by the way of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Louisville, at each of which places, and along the whole route, it was received with demonstrations of the most profound respect and sorrow. Even those who had for long, long years poured out the vials of calumny and detraction upon him, blasting, as far as in them lay, his good name, and blackening his fame, now vied with his life-long friends in offering the homage of respect to his character, and in acknowledging the great services he had rendered his country in her national councils. He had outlived their calumny, though it had deprived the nation of his services in her highest office; he was insensible to their post-mortem adulation.

Thus another of that great triumvirate of American orators and statesmen had passed from the theatre of his renown, full of years and honors. The third still remained, but soon to follow his great compeers.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CANVASS OF 1852

Was conducted with the usual demonstrations and efforts by the two opposing parties, and a third, which now entered the field of Presidential conflict, as it were, to try its strength, and to put itself in training for a future trial; I refer to the Free-soil, or, more properly, Abolition party, now represented in the contest by John P. Hale as their candidate for President. But the canvass was not a spirited one. The Whigs lacked confidence and fervor. They might admire Gen-

eral Scott as a general, and take just pride in his military renown, but they had no personal attachment to him; he had never served his country in civil life, and they knew not what kind of a statesman or President he would make, nor whom he would be likely to call into his cabinet. As a general, they knew him to possess a very large share of *esprit du corps*, and a high sense of what was due to a commander-in-chief, and that his organ of self-esteem was of inordinate dimensions; in short, he might be admired simply as a successful general, but could not be easily approached, freely consulted, or by any means advised. He carried with him a chilly atmosphere, and even when he seemed desirous to make himself agreeable, it was the condescension of the conscious superior rather than the frankness of a confiding friend. The result was, there was no fervor or *élan* in the canvass, and his subordinate in the Mexican war was elected, by a vote of 254 to Scott's 42!

General Scott obtained the electoral votes of but four States: namely, Massachusetts, Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee. This mortifying result was due, in part, to the fact that the "Free-soilers," or anti-slavery men, in the Northern and Western States, most of whom had heretofore belonged to the Whig party, now voted for a third ticket, though unable to elect "Free-soil" electors in a single State. This was the "beginning of the end" of the old Whig party.

MR. WEBSTER'S DEATH.

On a bright, serene October Sabbath (the 24th day), when all nature seemed hushed in repose, and no sound was heard save the deep, solemn moaning of the not far-distant ocean as its waves beat upon the rock-bound shore of New England, lay Mr. Webster, at his favorite home, Marshfield, surrounded by his family and a few devoted friends, awaiting the summons which no one may disobey. Conscious of his situation, and of the great change that awaited him, he was calm and collected, sustained in this trying hour by a Christian's faith and the hope of a glorious immortality. As the sun descended in the west, his golden beams poured gorgeously in upon the prostrate statesman for the last time; and as he slowly disappeared

beneath the horizon, Mr. Webster placidly sank into that sleep which will end only with the final trumpet-call.

The third and last of that great triumvirate of American orators and statesmen—in some respects the greatest of the three—had now passed away. He was succeeded as Secretary of State by Mr. Everett.

CLOSE OF MR. FILLMORE'S ADMINISTRATION.

The country, under the firm, steady hand of the President, who resolutely, yet in the quietest manner possible, enforced the laws, North, South, East, and West, now enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom from excitement. It seemed as if the ship of state, so long tossed by the winds of passion and folly upon the angry billows of agitation, had at length been guided by a skillful helmsman into a land-locked, placid bay, beyond the reach of storms and tempests, where all might feel safe and enjoy themselves. And the people, in Washington at least, did enjoy themselves during the remainder of Mr. Fillmore's administration; that is, during the winter of 1852–53, when society here was never more gay, cheerful, and attractive, and the two portions of the country, heretofore incensed against each other, never more cordially blended in social life. These "halcyon days" closed on the 3d of March, 1853. Mr. Fillmore retired from the White House on that day, and General Pierce entered it on the next.

However heretical it may now be considered to speak favorably of Mr. Fillmore's administration, I owe it to truth to say that few Presidents ever left their exalted office amid a more general chorus of plaudits from the press and the people, irrespective of party, than did Mr. Fillmore. There was at that time but one voice heard from one end of the country to the other,—that of "Well done, good and faithful servant." But the time soon came when the voice of condemnation became loud and overpowering; especially when he accepted a nomination for the Presidency, in 1856, thereby endangering the election of John C. Fremont, the Free-soil candidate, and aiding the election of James Buchanan.

He was severely denounced at the North by the Free-soilers

for having signed the odious Fugitive Slave Act, so obnoxious to the North generally. This act was, as I have already shown, one of the several acts denominated "the Compromise measures,"—one of them providing for the admission of California as a State with a constitution prohibiting slavery, and also for organizing the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, with the exclusion of slavery.

What would have followed had he signed all the bills except the Fugitive Slave bill, and vetoed that? Rebellion, undoubtedly. And yet there were good men at the North who would have had him veto that bill, and who severely denounced him for signing it. It was asserted that had General Taylor lived he would not have signed it, and therefore the death of the late President was looked upon as a great calamity. General Taylor could never have vetoed that bill. The different bills constituting the Compromise measures were but parts of a whole, and were each voted for in the Senate and House as such. To have defeated one of them, the others becoming laws, would have been an act of unpardonable bad faith, and would have provoked the rebellion which broke out eight years after.

The close of Mr. Fillmore's administration was virtually the close of the career of the Whig party. Its leader, Mr. Clay, and some of its prominent men had finished their labors and gone to their rest. Mr. Webster had been succeeded for a short time by Mr. Winthrop, who was appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts, then by Mr. Rantoul, a Democrat, for the remainder of the term, and then by Mr. Sumner, who was sworn in on the 1st of December, 1851.

The Free-soilers were fast superseding the Whigs. In the Senate of the Thirty-second Congress, 1853–54, were Mr. Seward, Mr. Hale, Mr. Chase, Mr. Wade, and Mr. Sumner, Free-soilers, each a host in himself, who, no longer contented to occupy a defensive position in regard to slavery, took the offensive, especially Mr. Sumner, and made bold attacks upon the institution and upon the Fugitive Slave Law,—that act so obnoxious to the free States, and which was rapidly converting Whigs, and even Democrats, into Free-soilers. Mr. Sumner's bold and fierce denunciations astonished, confounded, and in-

tensely incensed the Southern members, and finally brought about a most brutal and cowardly attack upon him by Mr. Brooks, a member of the House, and a nephew of Judge Butler, of South Carolina, with whom Mr. Sumner had had some pungent and irritating interchanges of sharp rhetoric.

The assault by Mr. Brooks, which nearly cost Mr. Sumner his life, fired the heart of the North, while it called forth the greatest exultation in every part of the South. In fact, this was the first bloodshed in the conflict between the two sections, which ended in the utter extinction of slavery.

Although the Democratic convention which nominated General Pierce for President had declared in its platform that the party would resist all attempts at renewing the agitation of the slavery question, and the President had in his first message assured the country that he would oppose all attempts to disturb the repose which the adjustment measures had produced, yet, very soon, Mr. Douglas was persuaded, or driven by threats, into a measure which reopened the slavery question, and created an agitation far greater than any the country had yet witnessed. The President and other leading Democrats were also driven into the measure by Southern Democrats, who had made themselves masters of the situation by their more artful management and audacious tactics. This measure was no other than the Nebraska bill, with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, or the declaration that it had been repealed by the Compromise measures and was now inoperative and void.

Mr. Douglas was then chairman of the Committee on Territories, and was the leader of the party in Congress, an undisguised candidate for the Presidency, which he knew he could obtain only by the vote of the South. When, therefore, this *demand* was made by resolute and determined Southern men, representing and speaking for the whole South, how could he resist, even though he well knew that the pretense of the Missouri Compromise being repealed by the adjustment measures was utterly false, and well known by them to be so? But *he*, the head of the party, being intimidated into compliance, how could General Pierce hold out when coaxed and threatened?

And so the South had their own way, and Kansas became the battle-field of the North and South, the war resulting in the formation of the Republican party, the election of Mr. Lincoln, and the great events which followed, and which have been ably portrayed by others.

The giants who had so long stood in the front rank of their several parties were now rapidly disappearing, removed by death, or withdrawn after long years of strife and labor, most of them having failed to win the great political prize which had such dazzling attractiveness in their eyes.

Mr. Clay, the great leader of the Whig party, was no more. Mr. Calhoun reposed under his own palmetto. Mr. Cass, defeated for the Presidency by General Taylor, had retired to the shades of private life, and his successful antagonist had followed Mr. Clay to the silent tomb. Silas Wright had left the Senate, and soon after passed from the stage of life, preceded, however, by Mr. Webster. Mr. Clayton soon retired, and fell a victim to a disease that had long threatened his life. Colonel Benton, who had been in the Senate for thirty years, an indomitable and sternly honest man and Democrat, now took his departure upon that last journey which all must travel, leaving to the world his "Thirty Years' View" of Congress, a most valuable work, and monument of his indefatigable and unceasing labor. Mr. Ewing, still hale and hearty, soon disappeared from public life, and grappled the law with his herculean mental power. Mr. Marcy, one of the ablest leaders of the Democratic party, who filled the office of Secretary of War under Polk, and of State under General Pierce, made his final exit from public life at the close of the administration of which he was the ablest member. Of the old political war-horses whose names had been familiar to the people of the United States for two or more generations, but two were left, Mr. Crittenden and Mr. Buchanan,—not counting General Scott, who was at the head of the army, fortunately, when the Rebellion broke out. Mr. Crittenden exerted himself with all the ardor of a fervent patriot to heal sectional differences, even consenting to become a member of the House of Representatives,—not having been re-elected to the Senate,—striving to

close the war without interfering with slavery. But no one could check the tidal wave of rebellion; and while it was at its height he joined his co-patriots and life-long associates, in 1863. Mr. Douglas had preceded him two years before. Mr. Buchanan, unfortunately for the country, and equally so for his own reputation, reached the Presidential chair, and by his pitiable imbecility became the pliant instrument of the secessionists who formed his cabinet, permitting the country to drift into rebellion, the end of which he did not live to see.

And so, very soon, disappeared in rapid succession nearly all the old party leaders whose names and doings make up the burden of these pages. A few, a *very* few,

"Rari nantes in gurgite vasto,"

still remain.

"Time rolls its ceaseless course. The race of yore,
That danced our infancy upon their knee,
* * * * * * *
How are they blotted from the things that be!"

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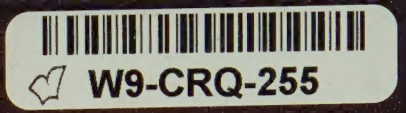
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